

# OUR VOICE



Illustration: Pieter de Vos, Jr

hope floats

april 2002



<PUBLISHER>  
Bissell Centre, Edmonton

<MANAGING EDITOR>  
Natasha Laurence

<DESIGN & PRODUCTION>  
Pieter de Vos, Jr.

<DISTRIBUTION>  
Ron MacLellan

<PROOF READER>  
Comma A'Plenty

<Cover Design>  
PF de Vos, Jr.

**EDITORIAL OFFICES & EDMONTON DISTRIBUTION:**

Bissell Centre, 10527-96 Street,  
Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 2H6  
Phone: 423-2285 Ext. 162  
Fax: 429-7008  
Email: nlaurence@bissellcentre.org

OUR VOICE is published to provide an income opportunity for economically marginalized people in our society while communicating their issues to the public.

OUR VOICE is a NON-PROFIT program that survives on vendors, advertising contributions and Tax Deductible Donations.

If you have any concerns about vendor behavior call our distribution team at:  
#423-2285 ext. 139

**ADVERTISING**

For advertising rates and related information, please contact  
Natasha @ 423-2285 Ext 162

**APRIL 2002  
VOL. 4 NO. 8**

Our Voice invites your contributions and input.

Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, unless otherwise indicated.

Our Voice welcomes written submissions (particularly those on PC or Mac compatible diskettes), cartoons, photographs or artwork.

Our Voice cannot accept responsibility for any submission. No part of this newspaper may be reproduced in any form without written permission from Our Voice.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of Our Voice, the editors or publishers.

Our Voice is a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA).

We decided this 8th Anniversary issue of Our Voice would focus on hope – the tough, tenacious little virtue at the heart of all human accomplishment. Our Voice is all about hope. Every vendor who stands on the street corner is taking a step in hope, acting against the alienation and despair of poverty. Every writer who tells his or her story or the story of others is writing in hope. They are writing against the fear that their stories are not important enough to be heard. They are writing against the sometimes overwhelming sense that in a world controlled by greed and self-interest, the ones who fall will not be helped up, but will be swept to the side of the road.

These actions taken in hope create individual change. And with that change hope grows. You make some money – you now know you can. You tell your story – somebody listens. You listen to someone else's story – community forms. You are not alone – you start to think about what else might be possible...and it all started with the hope that allowed the first step.

These are the little hopes – the practical day-to-day hopes, the irrepressible dandelion-through-the-concrete hopes, beautiful in their courage and stubborn refusal to give up. They are a large part of what Our Voice is about.

But there is another form of hope – a deeper hope – a higher, wider hope. It is the hope that looks at all the injustice in the world and still believes justice is possible. It is the hope that believes greed can be replaced by compassionate sharing, hatred can be overcome by love, apathy can be shaken into action by voices of concern, and that the machinery of the powerful can be stopped by the little people who stand in its way. This is the hope that also shapes this paper, and, strangely, the deeper hopes are fed by the daily success of the little hopes. Sometimes, in fact, it is the fulfillment of the little hopes that keep us going – the knowledge that, on this one day, this many people earned some money, Michelle had someone to say "I love you" to, Dougie had a guitar to play, Jake wrote another great column and Theresa got her computer up and running again.

I have a feeling this must be the way it is all around the world, the little human hopes feeding the deeper, higher, wider ones. And even if the deeper ones are never fully accomplished, in the success of the small hopes the deeper ones are, even now, as much a part of lived reality as their counterparts.

NATASHA LAURENCE

Our Voice is all about hope. Every vendor who stands on the street corner is taking a step in hope, acting against the alienation and despair of poverty. Every writer who tells his or her story or the story of others is writing in hope. They are writing against the fear that their stories are not important enough to be heard.

I started smoking at the time I could least afford it. I was living on Social Assistance with my three youngest children. I had many skills – none of them marketable. I had no marriage, no means of adequate support, no vision of a better future, no confidence that I could create what I couldn't even see and three little people counting on me to hold it all together. (Kids are funny that way; they trust you even when there is no evidence that they should.)

I was scared, gut-level, awake-at-four-in-the-morning, vibrating-at-the core afraid. I needed a cigarette. That sentence is the point of departure between my perception and the perception of many other intelligent people. Did I need? Did I want? Was starting to smoke at that time in my life just another one of the crazy choices that had brought me to the place I was – a skewed way of looking at myself and my life that was actually the root of my problems?

Or is life just sometimes so incredibly frightening and difficult that our coping strategies can take all kinds of seemingly illogical forms? Maybe it's a bit of both.

I would still say I needed a cigarette. I could write whole books about the connection I believe exists between alienation and smoking, between terror and smoking, between despair and smoking, between looking life directly in the face and lighting a cigarette. Is that a failure of courage or a sudden realization that maybe all is not right with the world and there is no way out but through – combined with a sense that getting through might require resources you're not sure you have and the knowledge that there is no one you can hand your life to and say, "Could you do this for me, I'm just not able right now?" So you light a cigarette and you keep going.

There is too much talk these days about the evils of smoking and not enough about the systems that terrorize and alienate people. Now that I have come to a time in my life when I could more comfortably afford to smoke, I think I'm ready to quit, but I can't help worrying about all the people I know who might not be ready. Funding the economic incompetence of the current provincial government on their backs is criminal. Tightening the financial screws on the vulnerable, the despairing, and the addicted should not be the answer to poor planning on the part of the people in power.

It has been proven that living in poverty is actually worse for your health than smoking. If the provincial government's actions in imposing an excessive tax on tobacco is really in the interest of the health of all Albertans, they must seriously consider investing the money they collect from that tax into adequate housing for all, SFI and AISH rates that allow survival. Then maybe we will believe they are taking health seriously.

NATASHA LAURENCE

**SPECIAL:**

Turtlevision (Pg. 7)

Global Hope (Pg. 8)

Maude & Health Care (Pg. 10/11)

Castro Speaks (Pg. 15)

**REGULAR:**

Letters to the Editor (Pg. 4)

Editorials (Pg. 5)

BBQing the Sacred Cow (Pg. 6)

Poetry (Pg. 16)

Crossword (Back Page)

> **april features** >



# HOPE FLOATS

tion of what was then called Spare Change. The people I met were enthusiastic about the project and quite proud to join in. Yes, they wanted to make some money, needed to make some money, but they were ready to work to do so, and would be proud to put in the effort.

That was 1994. Welfare rates had just been cut and thousands of people forced off welfare by the provincial government. People needed jobs and a source of income to survive. Some single adults were getting \$396 a month in assistance. (Since then the basic single rate has risen to just over \$400 a month.)

Some of the people I met then are still selling the paper today. There aren't a lot of options out there for many of our fellow Edmontonians. But the fact that they still work at this job is a testament to their courage and pride.

It isn't easy selling a newspaper on the street to earn enough money to eat and live. I know, I tried selling it. I'll never forget my first time out. As the editor, I thought it was important to see what it was like to sell our magazine - to test out the experience of the people I was working for, the vendors. Besides, I thought I could make a few extra dollars. I picked out what I thought was a good location - by the corner of the Boardwalk downtown - signed up for my vendor badge, bought some copies of the paper and headed out. Two hours later, and maybe just a loonie or so richer, I packed it in. It was tough. It was hard to watch people avoiding me, walking far around me, avoiding my eyes. I felt shunned. I don't necessarily blame Edmontonians. Many of us find it hard to interact on the street, deal with someone selling something, make a decision, say yes or no. But on the selling side of the equation it felt rough, I can tell you.

The whole experience wasn't made any easier when John, an old friend I hadn't seen for some time, came down the street. "Keith, you're selling *Our Voice*?" he asked, a bit surprised. That left me in a quandary. Why not be proud of what I was doing? It only took a minute for me to cave in, however. I explained quickly to John that I was putting the publication together and I wasn't out selling everyday to feed the kids.

So I gained a lot of respect for the vendors. And over the few years I worked with them, I made friends, heard some tough stories and witnessed some real courage.

I didn't really expect that eight years later the magazine would still be here, with some of the same people

selling it. There have been hundreds who have sold the magazine for short periods and used the money to get through a tough period. But, for a few people, it is a workable niche, a job, an income, though certainly not an easy income.

So they still go out, proudly, to earn some money selling a great little magazine. And they look forward to things getting better, getting ahead. I have to admit though, I haven't seen a lot of progress over these last few years. In fact our society seems to be getting tougher. Many people are doing well for themselves, you see lots of new Mercedes SUVs and BMWs on the street. But for lots of other people, the minimum wage jobs in stores, restaurants or hotels are still all they can get. Some people, many who sell *Our Voice*, can't even work in those jobs. I can't help but think that we could organize things differently, so that huge disparity wouldn't be there. It is so wrong that some people have so much wealth, and so many others live with such insecurity, deprivation and hardship. There has to be a fairer, more just way. We can't just take a whole segment of our people and say, sorry, we can't provide a real living for you. I refuse to believe we want to effectively discard some of our fellow citizens. That's a big part of why I think *Our Voice* is important... reminding us what so many people in our city have to face in life. It seems so clear to me that we have to make changes, that I believe when enough other people see this and learn about it, we will find a way.

That sounds a little bit like a deep-seated faith in progress... almost a superstitious belief that things improve. But consider what the options would be if you didn't have some faith like this. For me it's just unthinkable that things could go on getting worse for so many people. That's such a grim option that I don't even want to consider it. My article of faith is that we can make improvements... that's the only way I want to play and be in this game.

Maybe it's something like that kind of belief that motivates the people who sell this magazine too. They are getting up everyday and pulling together the courage they must have to go out and make their living. They do it, and greet the world with a smile on their face. If they believe each day can hold something better and are going out to try, in their small way, to make it happen... then so must I.

KEITH WILEY [FORMER MANAGING EDITOR 1994-98]

HOPE **H**

Let's **hope** the institution of marriage survives its detractors, for without it there would be no more adultery and without adultery two-thirds of our novelists would stand in line for unemployment checks.

PETER S. PRESCOTT

## What the world can look like...

I wanted to say that I saw pure desperation when I first met the people who were selling a newspaper on the street to earn money. But that wasn't the case. I started on as editor at the beginning of the Edmonton edi-

## A Legacy of Hope

What does hope mean? Oh my God I guess I can't be sure! I'll check the dictionary. Ahh! It means: to desire something and expect that it will happen or be obtained.

So what does that mean? In the context of *Our Voice*, what does that mean? In the context of the government what does that mean? In the context of the extremely wealthy what does that mean? In the context of regular, average people living regular, average lives what does that mean? What does it mean for a child and what might it mean for someone in the twilight of life? What does it mean for the Catholic Church and what does it mean for Muslims? What does it mean for Aborigines and what does it mean for Anglos?

All these people above live in our world so in the context of the world what does hope mean? How can we ever know?

In Edmonton's inner city hope is a word that is used a lot. Over the years, upon the pages of this magazine hope is a word that has been used a lot. So why is it used?

*Our Voice* talked about hope in the sense of change. We hoped that people would not live in poverty and we hoped that no one would ever have to be homeless or mentally ill. We hoped that no one would be exploited and mistreated because of race or gender or age. We hoped the world would become fairer. We even hoped the Conservative Government of our day in Alberta would somehow vanish from our lives. Mostly we

who worked there hoped we would survive personally while we reacted to and hoped for all this other seemingly impossible stuff.

Meanwhile the wealthy are hoping for more wealth. The government is hoping they can remain the government. Some regular, average people hope to stay regular, average people while some hope to become some of the wealthy people. Children hope for more ice cream and less cauliflower and the elderly hope for pain-free days and visits from their too busy families. The Catholic Church hopes for expansion of their gospel and larger congregations while Muslims hope for peace and rain.

Or so we assume! Maybe everything written above is bullshit or maybe it isn't. How do we know? How do we know what the world hopes for?

There is no doubt in my mind that in order to define what we hope for as a world, as nations and as communities there needs to be a broader base of relationships built. They need to be built between those people who are different in culture, in age, in bank account, in colour and in thinking. In my mind there is no other way.

People who are different from one another need to build bridges of sympathetic understanding between each other. They need to be in accountable relationships with one another. They need to listen to each other's stories and they need to have conversations about what they hope for. They need to have conversations about their pressures in the world now and their dreams of how the world should be.

How else do we lessen exploitation of those who are weaker, how else do we decrease an ever growing gap between rich and poor and how else do we lessen the alienation of and apathy toward those who have the most power? How else do we change who has the most power? How else do we move beyond charity toward justice?

The criticism of this is that it will take too long. There are

people who believe our world and our communities are in too big a crisis right now and who has time to build relationships.

"We need action now. We need to protest and we need to mobilize and we need to fight the power."

Hmm. I guess these are my current cynicisms because I think our biggest crisis is the lack of relationships among people who are different from one another. Every time I see a protest or a candlelight vigil being held in defiance of power (attended by the same people usually), I see the crisis growing. I see these actions blurring and deflating hope rather than defining it and using it to obtain the change we seek.

Without these relationships how do we ever begin to understand our collective vision of hope and how do we ever begin to tell the story of our world or the human story if you will without assumption and judgement?

What we need to build is a legacy and our actions need to reflect this. Often in social justice work these days there exists a hero syndrome. We as citizens cannot be obsessed with change for our own benefit. We cannot be focused on action that attempts to glorify movements or people and we cannot be focused on change that is crucial for us to be rewarded by. If we are, our actions in my mind will only distance ourselves from the change we seek.

The hope for me is in this legacy. As our world grows and changes, these changes need to make the world, our nations and our communities better and more equitable for those who come after us. These changes need to reflect our relationships and our collective values as much as possible.

A wise man once told me that there are all kinds of crises in the world right now and they need to be fixed now, but the only way we will ever fix them is to work at them for a long time and things will gradually get better. I believe this builds hope and power along the way - at least for what I hope for.

MICHAEL WALTERS [FORMER MANAGING EDITOR 1998-2001]



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## Letters can be mailed to:

> 10527-97 Street,  
> Edmonton, AB  
> T5H 2H6  
> Email: ourvoice@bissellcentre.org  
> Fax: (780) 429-7008

## Shovel of God

March 12th: Middle of a cold snap.

### L LETTERS

Then you take it all—the chronology, the letters, the interviews, your own knowledge, the newspaper cuttings, the history books, the diary, the thousand hours of contemplation, and you try to make a whole of it, not a chronicle but a drama, with a beginning and an end, the whole being given form and integrity because a man moves through it from birth to death, through all the beauty and terror of human life.

ALAN PATON

I was outside clearing our sidewalk because it had snowed again - the third snowfall since the last time our walk had been shovelled. It had been at least that long since our elderly neighbour, Marshall's walk had been shovelled and the packed snow was proving stubborn on my portion of the sidewalk. I dropped the shovel and got the ice scraper, which was helpful on the small section of my walk I was working on. But I decided to remove the loose, freshly fallen snow from above the packed snow so that there would be less to remove with the ice scraper. I picked up the shovel again and cleared a path along the top of my section of the sidewalk and continued on crossing over onto Marshall's section. I cleared all the way to the neighbour on the other side of Marshall, who had recently cleared his own part of the sidewalk. Since I was on the other side of Marshall's property, far from the ice scraper, I decided to try the shovel and see what I could do with it. Well, to my surprise the snow fairly exploded off the end of the shovel; not just the freshly fallen stuff but the hard packed lumps as well. It came off so easily, like icing off a cake, that I thought perhaps I had been somehow mistaken to grab the ice scraper for my part of the sidewalk. Anyway, I figured that there was no need to get it for Marshall's part as long as it was coming off this easily, so I just continued swiping the snow away. And it was easy.

When I was growing up on an acreage outside Westlock, Dad taught me how to use a scythe and I remember getting into a rhythm after his careful instruction. The grass fell so gracefully under my sharp blade that the clearing felt almost effortless. This hard packed snow on my neighbour's sidewalk was similar in that it didn't stand a chance. I felt like some kind of unstoppable machine and then it occurred to me... it wasn't me, it was God. In exchange for my small kindness to my neighbour, God had touched my shovel. I barrelled across the length of Marshall's sidewalk - step, swipe, step, swipe, step, swipe - all the while marvelling at the wondrous ease and efficiency of my magnificent shovel. The true engineer of this quick cleaning was made clear, however, when I reached the border of my property and once again the hard packed snow became unyielding. With the object of my helpful act being complete, my shovel came back down to earth again as a normal implement, its temporary divinity exhausted. Once again I had to pick up the ice scraper to hack away at the stubborn lumps of packed snow sticking to my part of the sidewalk. Once again, cleaning the sidewalk was a chore but I thank God for making at least part of the task an inspiring wonder.

RON

## A night-CAP

It was late - around 1 a.m. I was driving home down 95th street. I turned on 116th Avenue to park in front of my house. Beneath the darkened canopy of an old elm tree on the corner stood a girl, a prostitute, wobbly and meek. There was very little moonlight and only slight luminance from the cross on the corner church showed me her silhouette.

Often when I see girls working this deep in a residential neighbourhood I stop and let them know they shouldn't be there. I treat them decently and I speak to them as people who need to act responsibly. It's not right for them to be selling sex in front of people's homes and I tell them this. Sometimes they tell me to fuck off. Sometimes they leave and sometimes they stay and tell me their stories. Sometimes I believe these stories and sometimes I don't. Sometimes they don't leave so I call the police. Sometimes the police come and sometimes they don't.

On this dark night I didn't stop. It was late and I decided not too. As I pulled my car around the corner, I observed how young she was. She couldn't have been very far on either side of 18. As I pulled my car to a stop in front of my house, half a block up from where she stood, I checked back in my rearview mirror. A small truck rolled through the intersection and ambiguously purred to a halt in front of the church where the girl stood. She climbed in. The truck drove off and she was gone. Just like that.

A recent article on prostitution in this publication alluded to a young prostitute who was taken outside of the city, tortured and beaten to the edge of her life. I wonder how many girls are plucked away

in the dead of the night out from under luscious green canopies of elm leaves but don't end up as lucky. They will always be victims.

There is another side to this story as well. Each day and night these girls attract the men we call johns to our neighbourhoods. They race through our streets, harass residents and ultimately find the women they seek, pay \$50 and head back to their lives in other neighbourhoods and in other worlds. The more this happens the more each of us who live in these neighbourhoods become victims of prostitution.

There are more than 1100 members of a neighbourhood organization called the Community Action Project (CAP) who refuse to be victims. We don't accept our neighbourhood being a victim and we refuse to accept that girls working in prostitution should forever be victims.

There are two big questions. One is how do you get these girls off the streets and another is how do you keep the johns out of our neighbourhoods? Hmm... big questions indeed!

The strength of CAP is in the relationships neighbours have with one another. Our strength is also in the stories of these neighbours and how their stories relate to each other. Most people in North Central Edmonton have prostitution stories that involve fear and anger. CAP was formed as a result of this anger and a need for reorganization of power and social justice in our communities.

CAP has worked very hard to build strong relationships between residents in order to identify the consent for effective action. We have worked hard to build relationships

and allies within other institutions like the police, the city and agencies working with prostitutes. We have also worked hard to create tension between these institutions and ourselves because without tension you never achieve social change, you only rely on social service.

CAP is currently organizing to achieve the following:

- To work with Calgary Buffalo MLA Harvey Cenaiko on his motion in the Alberta Legislature to amend the Traffic Safety Act so police have the authority to seize the vehicles of johns for 60 days upon a first offence and on recurring offences the vehicle would be forfeited.

- To create bustajohn.com, a website which would publish the license plates and photos of johns who have picked up known prostitutes.

- To increase the level of foot patrol policing around neighbourhood schools.

- To build and deepen relationships with Prostitution Help Agencies to support their work of getting girls off the streets into healthier lifestyles, and to hold them accountable to the communities they are working in.

- To discuss and act on further strategies and best practices from other cities. For example when the city of Calgary Police Vice Unit, stings a john they will release thejohn on the condition that he refrains from entering a prostitution impacted neighbourhood again. If he is caught in the neighbourhood again he is forced to dress up in bright orange coveralls and perform community service right in the community. This, of course, takes away the anonymity johns so desperately treasure.

As much as most of us would like prostitution to disappear,

no one is naive enough to believe that it will. So while it still exists, where should it occur? Yet another big question. Most of the neighbourhoods in the city don't care because it's not occurring in their neighbourhood, and in the neighbourhoods where it does occur it's explicitly unwanted and explicitly unfair. But why should only a few neighbourhoods have to live with a problem that should rest on the shoulders of all of society?

Section 213 of the Criminal Code of Canada states that "communicating for the purposes of prostitution" is illegal. Therefore, no community would be able to win the battle to set up a "red light district" in a non-residential area without changing the Criminal Code itself.

In reality we have some very clear choices. We can make it nearly impossible for men to buy sex from street prostitutes and we can make it easier for girls to get off the streets or stay off the streets in the first place.

This is what CAP is doing. We've built power so neighbourhoods don't have to be reactive. We look at this issue in a broad sense. We are not trying to simply push prostitution from our neighbourhoods into another. We are looking for solutions that benefit everyone and set a model for action against street prostitution and its impacts on communities. And for those people who criticize us for just not wanting it "in our backyards", you're right. We don't want it in our backyards. No one should, and if they do they are not interested in changing anything. I suspect they are only interested in their own social heroics.

MICHAEL WALTERS

Community Organizer for the Community Action Project

## Avid Reader

I read your paper each time it's distributed.

I've slept outside winter and summer too, in hallways, walkways. I didn't consider myself homeless though because I usually make home wherever I am.

That may come partly from traveling but it's actually a belief or way that I am.

What do you think about drugging and over-drugging that goes on in schools, families, in hearts?

Ever since I can remember there have been stories of fighting off the sleep of drugs on TV, in stories, poems, etc.

The psychiatrists and psychologists keep your soul and spirit as dead as they can - and simply drug you so you can work.

Spirit and soul are all but by the way-side. Who ever mentions such?

And when we can't work, produce, of course there's no inflow of cash money, cheques, etc. or even something bartered or exchanged.

I think it would be neat if there were places where we could work a few hours a day and they had free room and some kind of board and some spare change in exchange for the work. Do you think that would work?

ANONYMOUS READER



# Fostering Hope and Positive Social Change

**I**t was close to Easter several years ago and a young woman and I were at my house rolling beeswax candles. We met at a safe house for women in transition from street prostitution. We found we had a common love of candle-making and said, "let's get together!" When we took a break and went outside for her to smoke, she said something like this: "Kate, I don't know how to tell you this. When I was on the street, I used to bring tricks ("johns") to park outside your house. I'm so sorry. I just didn't realize back then what that must have been like for people like you. I wasn't thinking about anybody else, just that I needed the money."

I remember saying "That's incredible, and it's more incredible that you and I should meet. Parking outside my house is in the past and we've both made a lot of changes. I can better understand why women are standing on street corners and what support they need to get out of prostitution. You can understand what it feels like for neighbourhood residents. What we can celebrate today is that we're here together making candles!" It was close to Christmas several years ago. A woman who used to be on the street came to a meeting of "Communities for Controlled

Prostitution". This neighbourhood-based group met monthly with police officers, front-line agencies, businesses and other concerned groups to educate ourselves and plan informed actions. Later, we changed our name to "Communities for Changing Prostitution" because survivors of prostitution started participating and said "Control it? No, we want to change it - prostitution hurts everyone!"

This woman proposed to the rest of us that we do a Christmas drive so women wouldn't feel the pressure to turn tricks for Christmas presents for their families. She said "Everyone likes to give at Christmas-time. Let's help them give to their families without doing something they'll feel awful about doing to get the money." The Eastwood Community Police station officers offered the station as the drop-off site for presents. The

**I have learned that when people from different life experiences get together to work on a common problem, great things can happen.**

business association volunteered to send out media releases.

Teddy bears, toys, food and other helpful items began to pour in. A small business took a unique spin and donated Zellers' gift certificates so that children could buy their mothers small gifts. A mother whose daughter had been murdered the year before brought beautiful dolls to give away in mem-



Illustration: Pieter de Vos

ory of her daughter as well as many other gifts and food items.

Crossroads, Safe House and Kindred House made sure the presents got to people. They also held a great big Christmas party in a church hall where many of the presents were distributed.

It was close to the weekend this past October. I was working at home and left at noon to go to the office. I stood in shock as I watched a young girl give a blow-job to a man sitting in the car parked in front of mine. There was no condom. I was all alone on the street and no other neighbours were around, so I didn't confront him. I took his license plate down and went inside to phone a Vice detective. By the time I got back outside, he had driven away. The Vice detective tracked him down and called him into the police station. The man had dropped off the young woman a few blocks away and a neighbour called the police complaint line. Officers were able to pick her up right away. She was 15 years old and high on drugs. Thanks to the safe houses and supportive

programs provided through the "Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution" network, police were able to get her some immediate help. She spent the weekend at a safe house instead of on the street.

I have learned that when people from different life experiences get together to work on a common problem, great things can happen. The work of fostering hope involves listening, reflecting, stretching our own knowledge and taking action. It means embracing pain and dreaming of possibilities. It means taking chances and making changes. It's also about perseverance and timing. Every year I marvel at the crocus bulbs that send forth shoots to break through the hardened, half-frozen ground. I know that it is the increase in sunlight which stirs the life-force in the bulbs hidden in the dark earth. I know that it is the light of hope that can call forth the best each of us has to offer.

KATE QUINN  
Prostitution Awareness and Action  
Foundation of Edmonton

It was an interesting experience being metropolitan editor of the Times, in precisely the same way as being simmered in a saucepan for a few years is terribly interesting.

A.M. ROSENTHAL

# The New Sustainable Economy

**A** small minority of us are predicting the demise of the fossil fuel economy. Are we crazy? Well, the way we burn the stuff now, it might be safer to predict that Ralph Klein will sign on with the Teachers Union, or that Stockwell Day will join the Gay Alliance. Of course it isn't going to happen tomorrow, but, when the time is right, it is astonishing how quickly change can occur.

So, why is such an assertion even remotely credible? When a major shift in the economy or culture of a society becomes imperative, very little can prevent that change, no matter how unlikely it may seem. Who would have imagined twenty-five years ago, when some people believed that cigarettes were actually good for your health, that smokers would be relegated to the back steps of public buildings in -30 C temperatures? Who would have believed in early 1989 that the Berlin Wall would be demolished before the end of the year?

So are we crazy? Sure, but is it sane to continue doing things the way we are? It is exactly because we are burning fossil fuels at an unprecedented rate, and spewing the waste gasses into our atmosphere at a level that is way beyond its carrying capacity, that

the pressure for change is approaching critical. Our Environment Minister is becoming progressively more desperate, flailing around making irrational claims, one after the other, trying to prevent the inevitable.

There are quite a list of negatives to a fossil based economy, some of which will remain even in a sustainable economy. Climate change, urban smog, obesity, urban sprawl, accidents that maim and kill, wars in oil producing countries, oil spills, destruction of wildlife habitat, encroachment on agricultural land, acid rain, exploitation of the underdeveloped world.

In spite of the mammoth efforts of some to ignore this elephant in the closet, larger segments of our society are waking up to the toll being exacted by this accelerated liquidation of our energy resources. We must not be afraid of a sustainable, fossil fuel-free economy, only of the fear of change. The Chinese symbol for change is the same for opportunity.

Those lower down the social ladder are always better able to adapt to change in the short term since they have less to lose. This is also why change for the better is so hard to create - sticking with the status quo mostly benefits the well heeled, who have control over the forces of change. The readers and beneficiaries of "Our Voice" are the people who should be shouting the loudest for a labour intensive, fossil free, sustainable economy.

The unfettered capitalism we are allowing to take root attempts to retain things the way they are. We are creating the type of economy in which unions, working people and the socially disadvantaged have little

power, and it is producing an almost job-free economy. The kinds of jobs being created are known as McJobs, or jobs the technocrats have been unable to eliminate. While productivity continues to rise, the unemployment rate is either static or growing. Capital is averse to people and prefers machines that don't get sick, don't take a break and never go on strike. When the engineers of the new economy find they cannot avoid using a human workforce they frequently ship the jobs to third world countries where labour is cheaper and pollution is seldom considered.

Over the last few decades, employment in the B.C. forest industry has gone down while the annual allowable cut has gone up. That's not the fault of the environmentalists, although the multinational forest companies would never tell you so. Walk through a modern gas plant, factory farm, water treatment plant or power plant and see how many actual warm bodies you can find. People are very scarce in the hi-tech, energy dependant world of modern industry.

Restrained and regulated capitalism will remain, as it should, in a sustainable economy, and so will the need for energy. The difference will be that more of the power and influence will be shared with everyone involved. Sustainable industries employ more people, they are more conscious of worker safety and the pollution is radically lower.

We have had major shifts like this before and society has adapted. Horse power was the mainstay of most enterprises at one time, but it was replaced by non-renewable energy in a very short time span. The horse was a major source of pollution in 19th cen-

tury London. Businesses had to change and many went the way of the dodo but, when fossil fuels took over, nobody wanted to go back. Now is the time for another shift.

Renewable energy generation, public transportation, retrofitting buildings for conservation, recycling, repairing, recovering and reusing are all labour intensive businesses that will put people back to work. In the entire history of human habitation on planet Earth, there has never been a society that took resources, used them once, and then discarded them by burying them in the ground. What will our grandchildren say about us 50 years from now when they begin the enormous task of removing all those toxins from landfill sites? All that stuff won't simply go away, and a large proportion doesn't even decompose (metals, plastics, paints, solvents, batteries, pesticides, glues, etc. Nobody checks what is thrown in there).

Change occurs when the situation becomes intolerable for a significant segment of the society. If the concerns of those downwind are left to fester, the change can become nasty (and we all live downwind). A few more floods, droughts, ice storms, forest fires, hurricanes and heat waves will bring that time on a little faster. Can we use our superior intelligence to manage the change and emerge from the other end of the tunnel relatively unscathed? Or will we be 21st Century Luddites destroying ourselves because we couldn't create a different way of living?

DAVID J. PARKER  
Party Leader Alberta Green Party





# BBQING THE SACRED COW

## Why not try Neo-Altruism?

**C** COMMENTARY

Once upon a time the world was very large and we were very small. Small groups of people followed moving herds, hunting and collecting whatever roots, berries, grains and nuts presented themselves to us. We call this the Paleolithic era. Some groups made a decision to stay put near these food-stuffs with their collections of tamed herd animals. From this decision the concept of land ownership emerged, in an era we now name the Neolithic and call the beginning of civilization.

Tracing our history from the Neolithic makes us feel safe by ignoring the fact not every group made the decision to stay put and wait for grain to grow. In the beginning it was fairly simple for the groups who didn't want to settle to travel around the territory of those who did. But over time, as more property became owned, planted or otherwise used, it became harder to find pathways around it. There was no longer any space with resources necessary for survival that was not owned by someone. The groups who did not participate in ownership were considered uncivilized, even where the practice of ownership forced them off traditional territories and into proximity with civilization. Because they were so-named and so-characterized they have been treated with contempt throughout history with. That contempt has been returned (on occasion resulting in cataclysmic invasions of settled lands by nomad armies) by the creation of an impoverished and angry underclass that preys upon "civilization" with all the cunning of skilled hunters.

This habit of closing off the travel routes, hunting territory and living space of indigenous peoples continues all over the world. Strip mining, forestry, oil exploration, farming and urban sprawl destroy first the environmental support systems of communities and then the culture, language, history and family relationships. It ultimately fragments entire societies. In our country aboriginal people have been particularly abused this

way, often by people who came to this continent because they had been victims of this very same process in their own country of origin.

This ancient ritual is being re-enacted again in Norwood. During the sixties and seventies when transportation was cheap people who wanted to settle down and watch grain, (and their children) grow, moved outward from urban centers. In the process they overran and eradicated those low-cost living spaces on the "wrong side of the tracks". In return, space opened up in cheap, older houses and ratty hotels in the inner city, abandoned by this outward expansion. These became home for the displaced remnants of demolished low-income communities on the outskirts of town, augmented by people displaced by continuing forestry and petrochemical exploration farther north, those rendered surplus to the labor force by technological advances, and recent immigrants from poor countries. This space didn't last long. Over the last thirty years, most of Edmonton's inner-city residential property has been torn down to create parking spaces for those commuting to jobs from the suburbs and acreage land. Norwood and other communities surrounding the demolished old urban core have become a refuge for this population.

The world is changing again. Utilities and transportation costs are now too high for young people to raise families in big houses in the suburbs and acreage land anymore. Older people whose children have grown do not need big houses anymore. These people want back into the city core again. They want those they see as transients, criminals, and losers living in these newly valuable spaces, out. Now! How long are we humans going to ignore this ongoing spiritual, cultural, and physical genocide? Is

there no time or place where we stop and look at what we are doing to each other? There is nothing wrong with being the kind of person who wants to stay put and wait for grain to grow, to build and consolidate material wealth. There is nothing wrong with being the kind of person who wants to run with the hounds, to become rich in unusual and unique experience. These are the two primal faces of the human psyche. In this time, in places like Norwood, these two faces encounter each other. There is a chance for recognition and reconciliation instead of alienation and separation. There is an opportunity at hand to negotiate this interface between the settled and the wild, of two different kinds of cultures and human

personality types in a way that is enriching for both.

Back when the world was large and we were small there was an understanding that, yes, the strong and the fast did bring in the game. The whole tribe still had to eat because those who were not strong and fast had other skills, knowledge and abilities the tribe needed. Altruism and the capacity to empathize and care for others was a valuable survival

skill for the species back then. The awareness that this is a survival skill has been lost somewhere. Now people do not look to their neighbors for help when they are in trouble, they call their insurance company. If their neighbor has difficulties, they just say:

"Well, they should have bought better insurance, or saved more, or had a better job, or got a better education or have been born into a wealthier family. I have no responsibility here, I took care of myself, and they should have done likewise."

Perhaps in this dialog that is going on in Norwood we can start working with the idea that neighbors who care about you, whom you can ask for help, are a more valuable resource than a comprehensive insurance

package. Wouldn't that be a radical concept? Wouldn't that make the economic machine less of a master and more of a tool? Poor people have more experience with this kind of interaction; perhaps some of the "undesirables" living in this area do have some valuable understanding to contribute. Perhaps being asked to contribute might make them feel better about themselves. Perhaps they might stop seeing their new neighbors as "prey". We have had 20,000 years of warfare between these two different manifestations of the human spirit. If that war hasn't resolved anything yet, is it not time to try something different?

Theresa McBRYAN

Theresa McBryan became a social activist when she found out the hard way, after raising three children, to responsible adulthood, mostly by herself, that she had no further value or role in the community. Terminated from Social Services support and still unable to find a job, she supported herself for three years on the income from sales of Our Voice and odd jobs. During this time she became a regular contributor to Our Voice. Gathering information for Our Voice columns became a very good reason for her to get out, connect and share strengths with other people who also know that the social and economic inequities in our society are neither just nor necessary. In terms of her personal realization, Theresa says:

"Writing is a wonderful way for me to understand the way I am thinking and feeling, to step outside the process. It gives me perspective. It also helps me untangle emotional conflicts engendered by encounters with my environment. I feel wonderful when people tell me that they look forward to reading my column. It gives me reassurance that I do still have something of value to contribute to the community beyond that of being a mother to my children."



These people want back into the city core again. They want those they see as transients, criminals, and losers living in these newly valuable spaces, out. Now!

## Win a \$50 gift certificate!

The April challenge for Pieter de Vos, our layout and design guy, was to create a paper that spoke about hope...I had some ideas, relatively normal ideas, you know, color, light, happy people, maybe, a flower or two. Pieter chose fish. Oceans of fish, all sizes of fish, fish in many settings...Pieter knows why...Do you?

If you have any idea why fish are at the visual center of this month's *Our Voice* please write and tell us about it. The answer that comes closest to the reasons that exist in the obscure mind of P.F. de Vos will win a \$50.00 gift certificate for *Thomas' Fishermen's Grotto*. E-mail answers to: [nlaurence@bissellcentre.org](mailto:nlaurence@bissellcentre.org)





# It's The Little Things

The expectation of something or an event to happen which is desired. This paraphrase of the dictionary meaning of hope gives me pause to consider whether or not I could be described as optimistic and hopeful, or fatalistic and predestined. If I sit quietly and consider many of the events, incidents and happenings, which have crossed my path, or I have witnessed, then I believe in hope. I can't touch it or see it, but if it had a color, it would be a bright and promising yellow. Hope is real and cradled in the little things.

Hope does not have to look like the wild, glaze-eyed optimism of the life-long prospector. His mantra is "This is the big one, the mother lode." I suppose in his worldview, it is necessary to have that kind of outrageous, rose-colored outlook. Otherwise, the thirty-five years spent walking, canoeing, and crawling over the barren lands of the north become insignificant and meaningless. Little indications and signs that compelling and real change is possible in people is where hope resides for me.

There is hope for men. I can recall working with a group of men who had been violent or abusive with their female partners. One fellow, a career military man, was addressing his abusive behavior by explaining his wife's 'part' in it. He began by blaming her for not being there and knowing how to push his buttons. She was responsible for the consequences of his anger. If she would not provoke him, peace would reign in their family. He was asked to describe a typical abusive situation.

As he continued to speak, face flushed with embarrassment and shyness, his eyes began to take on a different light. First, he squinted, as if looking at something far away. Next he closed his eyes and rolled them inward. He opened them wide and they became bright and sparkling. His story abruptly halted and then in an emotional choked voice he began speaking of how the anger he felt was his and he wanted to learn a different way of expressing it. I considered that as he had rolled his eyes inward, he had a moment of clear insight, what might be called an epiphany. The hope is this man experienced a defining moment in his relation-

ship with spouse, family and self.

There is a woman I know who left a long-term abusive relationship, where she felt emotionally, spiritually and mentally dead (her words). She had the courage to leave and strive for self-realization even though it meant loss of status and financial security. She worked hard and filled herself with self-knowledge. Under pressure from family and others she returned to her marriage.

Despite returning to her male partner, she raised her own consciousness. Hope is having the expectation that she can turn her knowledge into action within her own life or by sharing her experiences with her children and other women in similar situations.

A group of lawyers have recently been promoting the idea of collaborative

## Hope does not have to look like the wild, glaze-eyed optimism of the life-long prospector.

divorce. This is a process wherein lawyers will sit with their respective clients and work out a deal which serves the interests of all family members. They encourage their clients to work together instead of taking adversarial roles. This really sounds simple, but flies in the face of how lawyers typically handle cases. It is an approach which takes into account the well-being of the whole family.

Children are also the benefactors of this process. They are treated as part of the process while seeking a peaceful end. Children involved are not used as possessions to take away or be denied by one parent or the other. A shared parenting plan is implemented. Children in this approach see their parents role-modeling respectful and dignified solutions to problems. Yes, there is hope for lawyers.

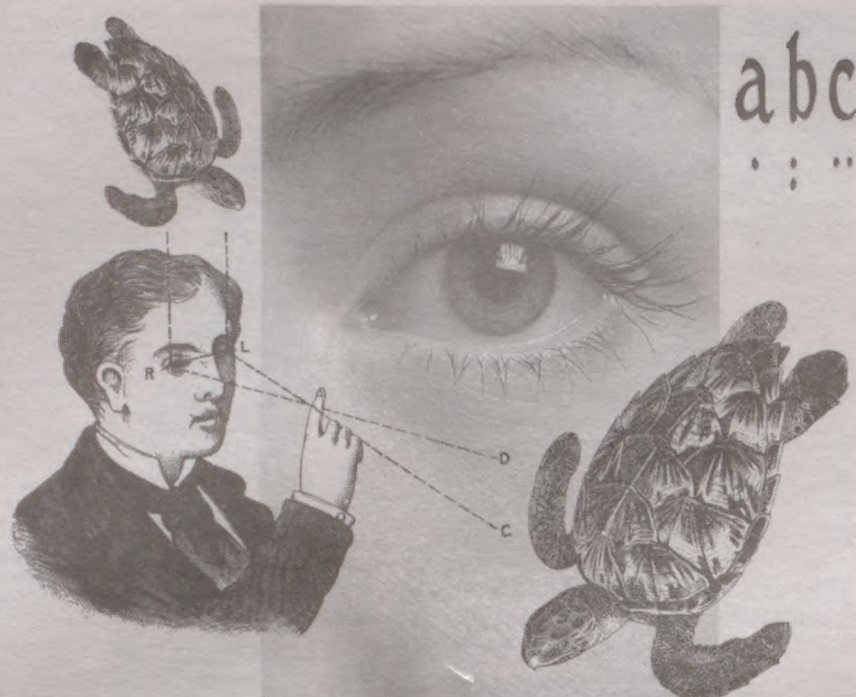
And so it goes. I delight in seeing little things that raise my expectations. I could gnash my teeth wishing for a society

and try to fight with me. My HOPES were quickly dashed and a fight would break out. So much for hope.

Time moves on: I'm an adult fighting drugs and alcohol. I see how this is affecting my life, and the only thing I have going for me is HOPE. I would tell myself someday I HOPE to be clean. That day was not to happen for a long time, 24 years, to be exact!! All through that time I had HOPE. When HOPE did appear to me it was in the form of an RCMP tactical squad, but I didn't realize it at the time.

Upon entering a treatment center for drugs and alcohol again that word would come to mind: HOPE. How I hoped to succeed with my long battle with these demons. That was 15 years ago. Today I look at HOPE not so much as wanting but as a chance to change. For all my brothers and sisters out there fighting demons, never give up on HOPE. It's right in front of you. All you have to do is reach out and grab it. Along with hope add a few prayers and welcome to the light. Hi Hi

MIKE SMITH



## TURTLEVISION

where people are more empathetic to the feelings of others. I could twist my face for a world where all people relate non-violently even in conflict. I could chose to sit and listen to gravity pull my skin into the ground as I lament the human condition. I prefer to seek and celebrate the little things. It is the small exceptions to the larger story that raise the possibility of change. Little changes, which start the process for individuals to reach their human potential.

There is an anonymous quotation, which says: "To believe a thing impossible is to make it so". If I look for and find little moments to celebrate, then I believe that the possibility for greater good exists.

CURTIS GRASCOE

I'm slightly uncomfortable with writing an autobiography. I will make it short and simple for two reasons. The first, to sustain my guarded sense of privacy, and the second, to keep the smile wrinkles on my editor's face. I'm a middle-aged person born into the male sex. I live alone, mostly, and have a family of five children and six grandchildren. They all reside in Rae-Edzo, North West Territories. Rae-Edzo is a small community on the northern tip of the north arm of the big lake (Great Slave Lake). So, I spent my formative and most adult years in a small, rather isolated, northern community. Physically, I stand nine-

hands high, weigh one hundred and seventy with green-eyes nested in a face marked with cynical wrinkles (a normal affliction for one my age). I drink too much coffee and smoke too many cigarettes, which I balance with regular dates at the fitness center.

I first arrived in the city three years ago to attend college. I studied Social Work and graduated with more questions than I began with. The Oilers were doing well and some work opportunities arose, so I decided to stay in Edmonton for awhile. I dearly miss the north and will return soon. There have been many defining moments, critical choices, and experiences during my time on this planet. It is these elements which have allowed me to make sense of my world and self. If I could condense my learning from life happenings and college into one sentence it would be: I am no expert in the life of others. Now, isn't that an oxymoron statement for someone who writes opinion columns?



VISION V

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart.... Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.

CARL JUNG

## Hope: A Chance to Change

Tansi! I have been asked to put my thoughts on paper concerning HOPE. For me as a child HOPE meant, "I want". You can just imagine how thrilled I was upon receiving something I really hoped I would get - a brand new 3-wheel bike!!!! Look out! I was king of the road. Imagine how I felt the next day when my mom returned it to the hardware store. Hope quickly turned to tears. Upon entering grade school I quickly realized I was different from the rest of my classmates. I was Native. The name-calling soon started and everyday I would HOPE that no one would call me names,

## The Vendor

He's a man standing on the corner  
With the bitter cold biting through his clothing  
His breath dances in the air  
and ice particles hang from his beard  
Standing in the bitter cold of the day  
Holding a paper in front of him.  
Watching, hoping someone will ask him for a paper  
WHO is this man on the corner?  
He's a man called a VENDOR for Our Voice

BETTY NORDIN

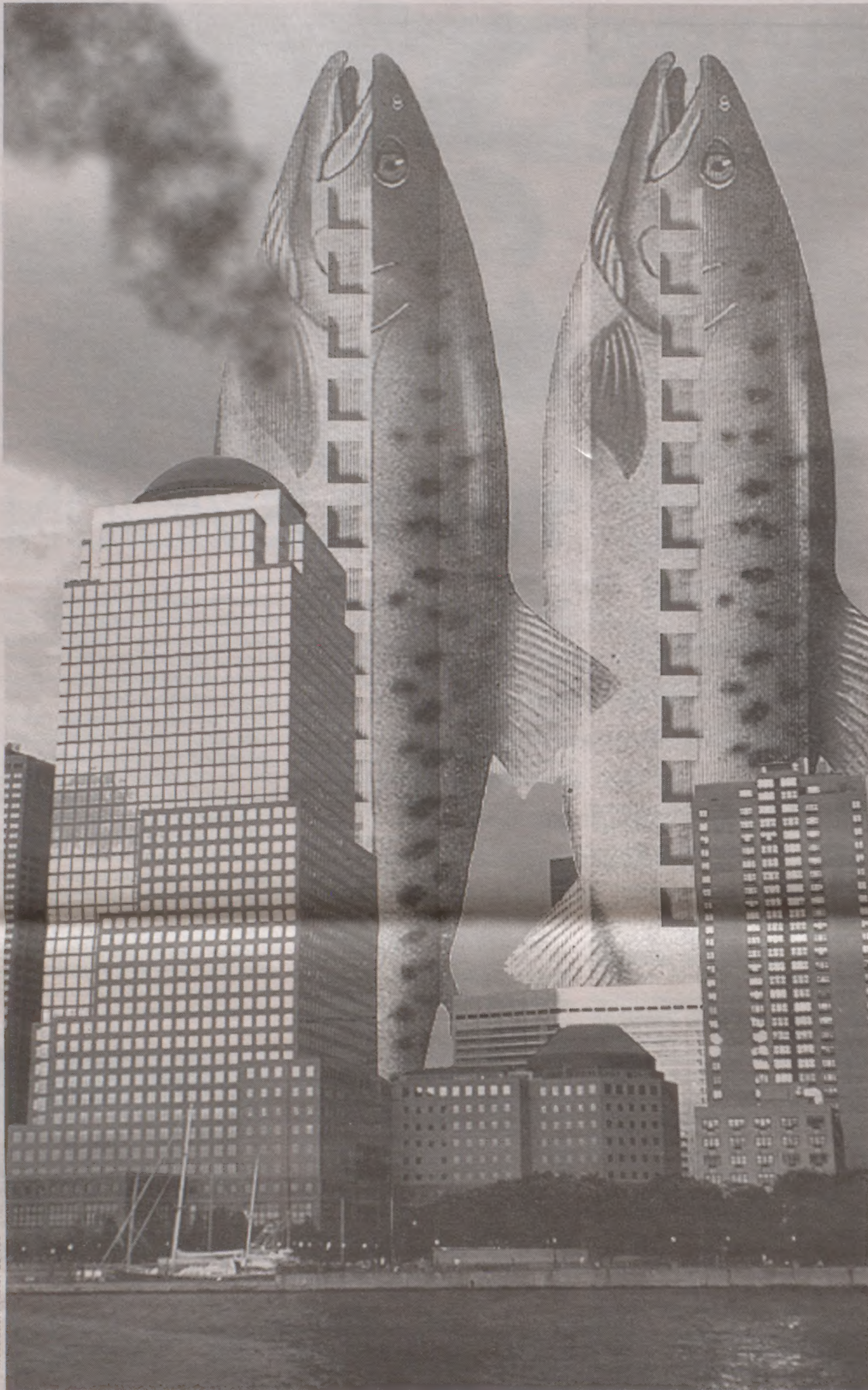


## H HOPE

**Hope**, like faith, is nothing if it is not courageous; it is nothing if it is not ridiculous.

THORNTON WILDER

Illustration: Pieter de Vos



# HOPE

"Hope is not believing everything will turn out all right. It is believing it all makes sense no matter how it turns out."

of hope that is real, legitimate and practical, not just a feeling I can have if things are going well. I need hope to be a verb, an action word, not just a noun, a thing that sits there.

What are my choices? Feel vaguely hopeful when there is some good news in the world, feel despair when the headlines are all reminders of how badly we can treat each other, and retreat to cynicism when it seems the bad news outweighs the good? Keep my head in the clouds, believe it will all work out fine, somehow, sometime, and don't let myself notice the evidence indicating that's not what is happening?

Or be intentional in hoping, be patient, keep working and struggling and persevering?

I want to choose the latter. It lets me be a participant, not just a recipient. If we can only be hopeful when we are given enough proof that there is reason to be hopeful, it hardly seems that is hope at all. If we can only hope when some immediate problem goes away, it hardly seems that is hope at all. I think we need to hope against hope; we need to keep testing if we are hoping in big enough ways.

Hope in action will challenge the easy answers. There are a lot of pretty grim things going on around the world. They are not going to change unless we tackle them. Ask tough questions. Demand change. Stand firm against pressures to obey. Keep our eyes fixed on an image of what is fair and good. For that we need to deliberately choose hope, work hopefully, understand we still might not get the results we want, and keep working anyway.

I can't tell you that things are getting better and better every day in every way. But I can tell you that things make sense even when we don't see it and that it is important we not give in to the madness. And I don't think it is chance that the sisters of Hope have always been named as Faith and Love. When we commit ourselves to be people of hope, we are joining a strong team that can make a difference right away, that will make a difference in the long haul.

JIM GURNETT

Executive Director  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre For Newcomers

Wednesday morning. Lead story on the 6 AM news-- a suicide bomber in Israel has died along with six others on a bus. Later in the morning I open my e-mail and there is a long, terrible letter from an Anglican priest in Jerusalem about the abuses committed in Ramallah by Israeli soldiers. Evening is the beginning of New Year's Day for Afghanistan, where the UN estimates more than 100,000 children are in immediate danger of dying of malnutrition, ten million unexploded land mines lie about, and the whole country is utterly destroyed by 24 years of conflict. Friday evening I will be at a dinner to raise support for the million Burmese refugees living in makeshift camps in Thailand. Saturday evening I will be at an event in solidarity with Kurdish people,

persecuted by several governments as they seek to have a homeland of their own. Last Saturday it was a march in support of a free Tibet, held under Chinese oppression for more than 50 years. Just out of masochistic foolishness I skim the daily paper and learn Zimbabwe has been thrown out of the Commonwealth over election corruption, things are deteriorating in Columbia, new Hindu-Muslim violence is feared in Gujarat, more killings are expected in Italy after a political assassination—and an iceberg the size of Prince Edward Island has broken loose from Antarctica because of global warming and is drifting loose in the South Atlantic Ocean making things dangerous for sailors.

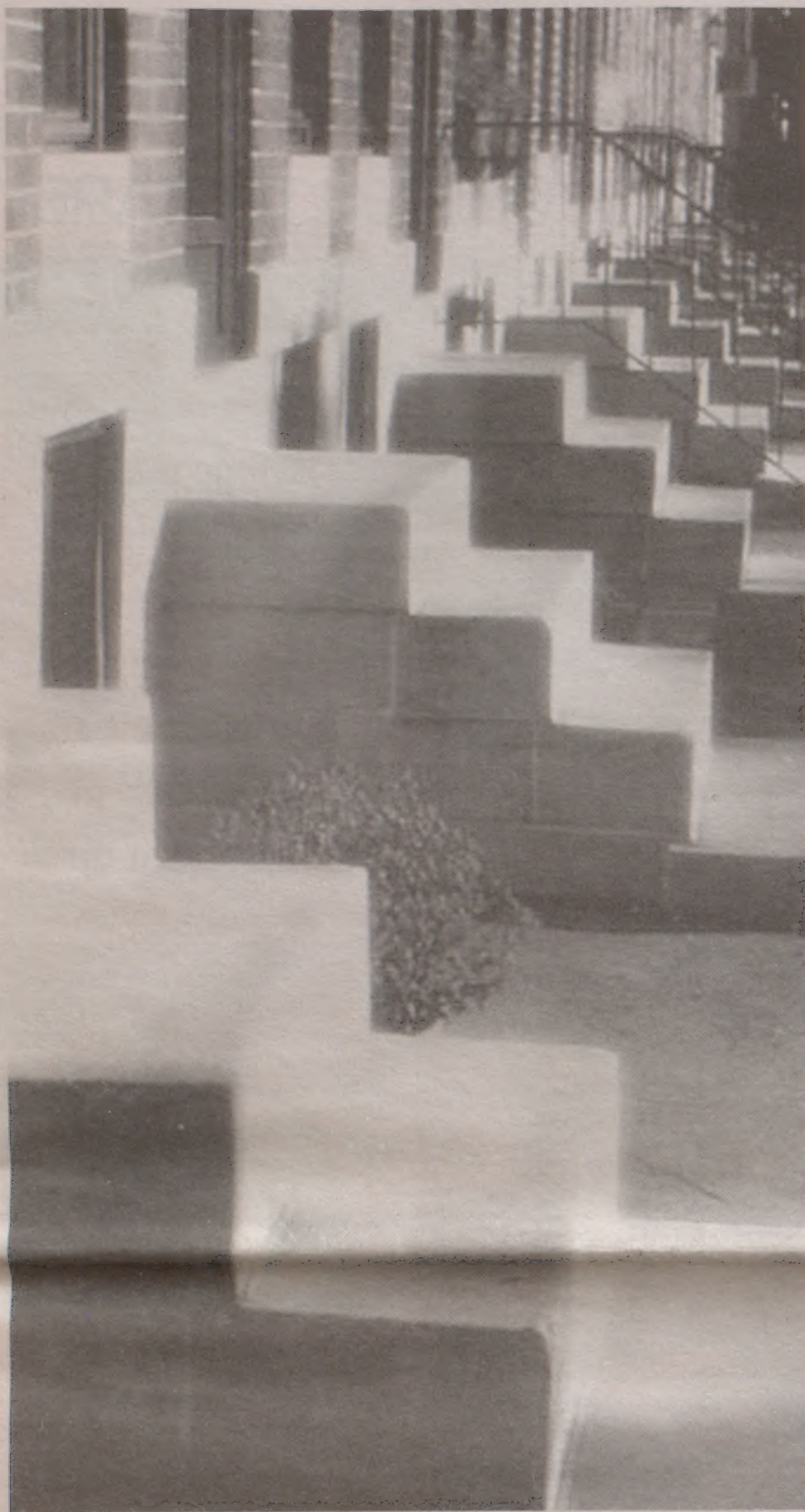
And in the midst of all that, my assignment from *Our Voice* is to share some

thoughts about hope in a global context.

If only hope was a matter of putting on rose-coloured glasses. I'm sure I could find lots of cute, sweet stories that would deflect my attention from this other stuff and remind me that there is a lot of good in the world. Britney has a new boyfriend. Some soldiers saved a buddy from falling out of a helicopter. A group of young folks somewhere had a fundraiser for a poor family, whose house burned down. Rose-coloured glasses. Very attractive idea. But not hope I think. That is too easy and too flimsy.

No, I like what Czech writer and politician Vaclav Havel says—"Hope is not believing everything will turn out all right. It is believing it all makes sense no matter how it turns out." In a world where many things seem to be entirely run amuck, I need a view





# GENTRIFICATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS

competitive world the housing market is just one big business opportunity for those who can harness it.

In the Eighties many Canadian cities experienced a boom of urban renovations. As suburban areas became gradually more developed, and in some cases proved to be dreadfully aseptic, many people began to seek out the advantages of revitalized urban areas. People saw the potential of heritage homes, valued the urban frenzy and the convenient proximity to downtown cores. One example that comes to mind is the district called "le Plateau Mont-Royal" in Montreal. In that case the Sixties saw an exodus to the suburban communities; many citizens (those who could afford to do so) opted for moving outside of the island of Montreal. By the early Seventies Le Plateau was greatly affected by the fast expansion of downtown. Indiscriminate demolitions, a large number of house fires (more than 300 a year in the early Seventies), and the condemning of hundreds of apartment buildings forced many people to either abandon their community or relocate within the neighboring areas. However, over time, a transformation began to occur. Toward the end of the decade the area was gaining the reputation of a "fashionable" district and this factor set off the local urban renovation phenomenon. In many cases property owners were awarded grants to renovate properties that were previously left in disrepair (in some cases on purpose). This arrangement somewhat increased property values and provided justification to raise rents.

In the early Eighties the economic downturn hit the district hard. However, the cultural factor continued to indirectly steer the area towards gentrification. Le Plateau continued to increase in popularity and a new trend occurred: co-property. From 1981 to 1986, 13,000 apartments in the area were converted to condominiums. This was a time when investors, sensing the opportunity, purchased properties and cashed in on the fashionable reputation of the area. Property value increased sharply and the tenants got squeezed a little bit more. All along, many property owners continued to benefit from various government programs and raise the rents based on the improvements. As far back as the Seventies tenant associations have emerged. As is often the case, the main issues have centered on getting the various levels of governments to commit to fair legislation. In some cases gains have been won, but the fight goes on and remains trench warfare.

In Montreal, as in many other examples of the urban renovation movement across Canada, the myth is that successful people have found themselves at the right place at the right time. It may be partially true, yet one still has to have the capital to invest. However, it is just as much a myth to say that all investors invariably have no conscience. Admittedly, when you live in poverty anyone who makes more than \$30,000 is upper class. Generalizations are not always helpful in framing the problem. There are lots of good and socially responsible landlords. There is danger of falling into the stereotype of the bad guys against poor people; too simplistic and not useful in mending fences. Many who invest in an older neighborhood want the property values to go up because in many cases life savings are at stake; that is understandable. However, while it is critical to preserve the rights of private investors in a system of free enterprise it is essential to lobby for a fair deal for tenants.

When the market economy obviously fails a sizeable portion of our population we have to be forthcoming enough to acknowledge the damage; anything else is hypocrisy. Democracy is in part defined by the ability of the majority to elect governments and maintain freedom of choice. When this very prin-

ciple allows a minority (capital holders) to influence the fate of a vulnerable portion of our population we have the right to ask whether it can still be called democracy. Governments have to be held accountable to create a system of checks and balances. Western democracies are viewed as the land of milk and honey by the rest of the world. Yet, while the situation is even worse in the vast majority of the world it is not enough to rationalize letting things slide even further at home. It's no secret that capital holders continuously push for governments with a hands-off approach. Nearly seventy years of right of the center rule in Alberta has got us where we are now. If anything, we need monitoring on the part of elected representatives. Moreover, in a low vacancy rate market legislations are required to curtail landlords' appetites. This is the foremost concern when referring to gentrification of the inner city. It is very noble to work on building low income and subsidized housing facilities; indeed, social housing is a necessary investment in our communities. Yet if we ever aspire to any kind of equality in this province we have to take it a step further. At the level of city council our elected representatives are very aware of the issues plaguing the inner city. They know our neighborhoods will come around eventually; they understand that a low vacancy rate and the realities of the law of

For many, fatalities of gentrified neighborhoods simply represent the necessary drawbacks of a free market economy. However, does it mean that the more capital you have to invest, the more rights you have over the lives of others?

demand will stimulate the revitalization of the area. Why do it with grants and legislation when the laws of market will ultimately get the job done? As rundown as the inner-city may be it constitutes a promising long-term investment and like it or not it's just a matter of time before change occurs.

Since the inner-city includes some of the oldest neighborhoods in our city there is value in keeping this heritage standing. Needless to say, there are huge problems within our communities. No matter which perspective you choose, change is needed. We need more stability and safety; nonetheless, we also need more fairness. One thing that won't change is the need for people who are most exposed to get organized and help in steering our communities in the right direction. As individuals, we need to join associations who hold our elected representatives accountable. Individuals can't do it alone. Because this is just the way it works, one cannot expect the world to be fair. Anyone who struggles in the inner-city knows that.

GASTON SYNOTT

NEIGHBORHOOD **N**

The avenues in my neighborhood are Pride, Covetousness and Lust; the cross streets are Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth. I live over on Sloth, and the style on our street is to avoid the other thoroughfares.

JOHN CHANCELLOR

The word gentrification has emerged as a catchword amongst low-income housing advocates and promoters of social justice. It is an expression closely associated with urban renovations, the revitalization of older neighborhoods and the dilemmas the process often creates. The expression also prompts frowns and rolling of the eyes on the part of some who use an expression of their own to describe social advocates: bleeding hearts. Admittedly the term gentrification can be used indiscriminately. In the best cases foresighted citizens have resurrected entire districts that had seemed doomed forever. Their efforts, first hailed as progressive neighborhood revitalization, were then labeled as gentrification. Where is gratitude in this world when you need it? One thing is certain -- not all neighborhoods that have been gentrified have been so in the same context. In some cases districts have traditionally housed working-class families and only went upscale because the area was the next best business opportunity in a market

of low vacancy. Examples abound in several of the larger Canadian cities (Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver). Other areas that had seen much better days fell into disrepair when abandoned for the profit of urban sprawl communities, only to be rediscovered later.

Developers are not intent on eliminating housing opportunities for low-income families; it is the result, not the purpose. It is simply a matter of return on investments, a necessary process in a capitalist society. As obvious as these statements may sound, they merely reveal the tip of a massive iceberg. For many, fatalities of gentrified neighborhoods simply represent the necessary drawbacks of a free market economy. However, does it mean that the more capital you have to invest, the more rights you have over the lives of others? It sure looks that way. In effect, this is the same sleight-of-hand that makes murder victims become war casualties when it suits one's purpose. It's the aged survival of the fittest theory. While citizens need to pull their own weight and survive in a



# IN THE SHARK TANK

MAUDE BARLOW & THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

**F** FUTURE

**Future shock** [is] the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time.

ALVIN TOFFLER

Illustration: Pieter de Vos



## Profit is not the Cure

**M**aude Barlow, the National Volunteer Chairperson for the Council of Canadians, was in our city on March 14th to talk about the fight to keep Medicare. Barlow is a well-known political activist and outspoken crusader for citizens' rights. Described by *The Globe and Mail* as "Canada's real leader of the opposition," she is the author or co-author of ten books, including *Parcel of Rogues: How Free Trade Is Failing Canada* and *MAI: The Multilateral Agreement on Investment and the Threat to Canadian Sovereignty*, with Tony Clarke. Her autobiography, *The Fight of My Life: Confessions of an Unrepentant Canadian*, was published in 1998. Ms Barlow called me from British Columbia while on her 16 city "Profit is Not The Cure" tour.

**MAUDE:** First of all I'm delighted to talk to you and I'm a big supporter of *Our Voice* so thank you for wanting to share the message and welcome greetings to all your readers.

**OV:** You are well known as a strong opponent to privatization issues such as water and health care. What is the message that you will be presenting at your lecture in Edmonton on March 14th?

**MAUDE:** I guess I have three major messages. The first is Canadians want Medicare, it's our public system, we fought for it. It's not a privilege, it's not a charity, it's a right of citizenship. It's a small, elite group of powerful interests in this country that are trying to tear it apart for their own reasons and Canadians have to stand up and fight for it.

The second message is that the Council of Canadians are building a national coalition, we've launched a national campaign. I'm on a 16-city tour talking to Canadians from coast to coast about how precious our system is and how important it is that we fight to maintain it and how we can work together and build coalitions.

I know people in Alberta and in British Columbia, where they've now got an Alberta-type government, or my province of Ontario, are all feeling deeply angry at our provincial governments in saying that we should (privatize health care). The major message is that we cannot let the federal government off the hook. In specifics, I go after the Chretien Liberals who have not only cut federal funding back to the bone but have also restructured so that the provinces are allowed to put money into private services and who signed these trade and service agreements that put our health care directly

at risk. And finally, they are promoting a regime wherein these big drug companies have twenty-year patent rights that are putting prescription drugs through the roof.

So we say that it's not just the knowing neglect at the federal level, the federal Liberals under Chretien have set Medicare up for a fall because it's on a collision course with their values of economic globalization. They see it as an anachronism from another time and that we have to basically sacrifice it. They won't say that to you honestly, but if you look at what they do as opposed to what they say, there's a pretty compelling case for this.

So that's the second major message. I'm going to talk to Canadians about the need to really nail a lot of this back at the federal level and hold them accountable. Ralph Klein couldn't do what he is doing if the federal government...

**OV:** Hadn't given the provinces so much power?

**MAUDE:** Absolutely, and if they were implementing the Canada Health Act. The third major point is that we, on our side, have to offer an alternative. We can't just be standing up for the status quo. So we go back to the Medicare Act of 1966 and we say that they only went halfway because there was such dissension at the time they made a compromise. Instead of bringing in a full public health care system, such as we would have in education, they only insured

hospitals and doctors. And in so doing they insured the two most expensive parts of the system. So all of the money and the energy and the infrastructure went into building hospitals with layers of expensive administrators, doctors, specialists and medicines instead of into a different kind of community system that we feel is the answer.

So we are calling for a community based, primary care health system with doctors, nurses and other frontline health care personnel all on salary that could take the bulk of health care. That's where you would go if you cut your finger, where you should not go to an expensive emergency ward, (saving) the hospital for what they are needed for. But to do this we say that the federal government has to reinvest and has to move back to a funding of at least 25% of the system, they're down to about 12% now from almost 50% when it was launched. They have to take profit out of the system. Profit is not the cure for health care. They have to make sure that health care is basically airtight exempted from all the trade agreements. I would argue that they would have to reverse Bill C-91 which gave drug companies these twenty-year patent rights which have resulted in an incredible increase in drug costs. They have to show some leadership. They have to tie the money that they've given to the provinces into a not-for-profit system.

**OV:** As far as I knew, before these trends in deregulation and privatization started coming into play our system was world renowned for having the cheapest, most accessible health care. So how could



anyone other than someone with a vested interest in making money want to change something that was envied world-wide?

**MAUDE:** Exactly, the only people who could claim that it was not working are doing it for vested interest and you only have to look at the comparisons to the United States where they spend twice what we do per capita on health care and 44 million Americans are uninsured for health care at all and another 200 million have no long term health care or no health care for anything other than emergencies. Two-hundred and fifty-four Americans die everyday because they have no health care insurance. The stories of these huge corporate mergers of these HMO's, they're horrible (stories) and under the trade agreements, anytime anything is privatized in any of our provinces, these companies are gaining rights to come into Canada which they are dying to get into because they have already saturated the American market. They really want to go global. So, you're absolutely right, it's people with a vested interest. If you look at the facts they tell you that health care has worked for Canadians: we are healthier than Americans, we live a lot longer. Our infant mortality rate is lower, our maternity mortality rate is lower, and, on a whole other host of indicators, Canadians are doing better and have gained from our health care system in a way that Americans have not unless they have the money to buy.

**OV:** Of course when you bring money into the picture you also get unnecessary surgeries and unnecessary prescriptions. I understand doctors get incentives for writing prescriptions for certain drugs and procedures.

**MAUDE:** And they also get incentives for cherry picking "healthy" clients, clients with full time jobs so the coverage is good. They also get incentives for not prescribing expensive surgery. They also get extra money for not costing the system money. Two-thousand three-hundred American doctors signed a statement two years ago that was published in a medical journal saying that they were forced to treat people as a commodity and not as human beings because they were not allowed to care for them as people.

**OV:** This may be an opinion I'm asking for but, I see this time and time again where Alberta acts and Ontario follows. What do you think the motivating factor is between Klein's strong push toward these private clinics.

**Maude:** I think it's ideological and I know Klein says he's not ideological, he's just looking for what works, but I think you are who you hang around with. I think he hangs with corporate friends, I think that when he retires he will find himself where Brian Mulroney did, on the boards of directors of these big companies that he was friendly with when he was in power. It's a mindset, he doesn't hang out with unemployed people, fixed income people or teachers, nurses or front line health care workers. He hangs around with the big guys, oil patch guys and so on and they believe that the private sector can deliver everything better. They

have bought the notion that health care is a product and you should be able to buy the best health care product that you can afford. Then they say, oh well, we will still have a public system for those who can't afford it. But what they don't say is that the public system will be impoverished as the best of everything moves away and many people lose their incentive to fund it because they no longer use it, they are using their own money for their own private system. Who wants to spend money on their own private system and fund somebody else's public health care? I think, in the end, for a politician like that who has bought into it and is determined - I don't think he cares what Albertans think of him - I think he is determined to make this his legacy and I think that all of Canada should be very angry with Ralph Klein and what he's done. Now, we have our own Ralph Klein in Ontario and, boy, oh boy, am I ever feeling the anger here in British Columbia. People are just enraged. Campbell's even got the doctors mad at him, which is really quite funny: who can I get mad at me now? In a way they've almost over-reached themselves and there is going to be a backlash and the backlash will come in the form of a national fight back against what these guys are trying to do to our health care system.

**OV:** The backlash had been a long time coming since the severe cuts in 1992, no one could believe it.

**MAUDE:** I've never seen anything as ruthless as what Ralph Klein did. Not only to the hospitals, but to the people on social assistance, to seniors. It was just absolutely brutal. It was not the act of a caring human being.

**OV:** A remark you made earlier regarding opening up the doors to U.S. doctors, does this stem back to NAFTA?

**MAUDE:** I think that NAFTA is just a very good excuse for them. I used to think that NAFTA was forcing them to do things, but I've changed my mind. I think NAFTA is the best excuse they can use. They go ahead and negotiate these trade agreements and tell us they're harmless and that they're going to protect culture or the auto pact or health care but when it comes down to the count they say "oh, we had no choice, we signed this trade agreement" and it tell us we have to do the following things. For instance, I think the Chretien government is refusing to bring a ban in on fresh water, they are using NAFTA as an excuse but I think it's a happy excuse. They want the right to be able to sell water in the future. So I think NAFTA has become a way of enforcing something they want to do but they don't have the guts to run on a platform.

**OV:** Not to get off topic but I spoke with the Govt. of Newfoundland regarding bulk water sales when the Premier was touting selling water as a way to allow "our kids to go the University for free" and the Feds said it was provincial jurisdiction and the provincial government said it was federal. Isn't water a cross-boundary jurisdiction?

**MAUDE:** It's terrible the way they were throwing it back and forth and it's only because of people reacting so strongly that Newfoundland backed off. Which goes to show you that in the end, people are going

to have to rely on themselves, which is why we've launched this Medicare campaign because exactly what happened with water is happening with health care. Jean Chretien has sent Romanow out across the country and has said "I won't do anything until he reports.." Klein is saying, "Well, I won't wait for the report. I will implement the parts of the Mazankowski Report that I want."

So, here you have the provinces moving full steam ahead on privatization, the federal government waiting for Romanow and a lot of damage is being done while he's on the road. It's passing the buck on all levels; no one is minding the store. None of us got to vote on a private health care system but if we don't fight now, that's what we'll have. We're gonna lose it, no question about it.

**OV:** How do you reverse a bill like C-91, what steps do you take?

**MAUDE:** It's very hard because the federal government, as you know, had campaigned against Bill C-91 in 1993 and then immediately changed their mind and then signed NAFTA which basically guaranteed that they could never undo C-91. They went around trying to convince us that they never had a choice. Now they have a very incestuous relationship with the drug companies. Again, it's knowledge - I think most people don't know why their prescription drugs are so high. So part of this campaign across the country is to get that information out and let people know what C-91 was about, why the costs are so high and what they can do about it. But I think only a national groundswell of public anger and opinion is going to do the trick. We are meeting with editorial boards of the major newspapers which, believe me, is no fun.

**OV:** Well, no kidding, they're corporate owned....

**MAUDE:** You know you find decent people working there but often you get people with such a pro-private mindset that you can't even begin a dialogue. These people are putting out really negative stories about Medicare and make it the worst possible form it can sound. (They'll say) "There's no money, can't afford it, we have to go private" and they are dramatically affecting many Canadians, so it's a big fight. I keep saying to people, yes it's a big fight but think about how big a fight it was the first time around when our parents and grandparents fought for it. If they can do it, we can do it.

DALE LADOUCEUR

Maude Barlow's paper on "Profit is Not the Cure" is on the Council of Canadians website ([www.Canadians.org](http://www.Canadians.org)), along with a protest kit you can have sent to you. The Council of Canadians, founded by Edmontonian Mel Hurtig, is an independent, non-partisan organization, with over 100,000 members and 50 chapters across the country. A non-profit, public interest organization, it does not take money from corporations or governments. It is sustained entirely by the volunteer energy and financial assistance of its members.



Illustration: Pieter de Vos

Estimated number of fireflies it would take to generate the visible brightness of the sun: 14,286,000,000



# THE STREET GOODS

**S** STREET

Crossing the **street** in New York keeps old people young—if they make it.

ANDY ROONEY



Photo: Pieter de Vos

## A Year in Review

**W**hen I first walked in to the Our Voice offices just a little more than a year ago, I had no idea what I was in for. Ron Maclellan, our Distribution Manager, wanted to hear from me why I would want to sell the paper, and I tried really hard to give him an answer that would sound like I knew what I was talking about. At that time, I had no idea what the Our Voice community was really all about—or even what the paper was all about—all I knew was that it was a way to make a few extra dollars that I desperately needed. Ron cut me a tag and sold me ten papers on account, and for the princely sum of one dollar I was in business.

I had no idea where I would go to sell my papers, or how I would go about it—I

just headed out and somehow ended up in front of Scotia Place—a fake smile pasted on my worried face—a hand full of Our Voice papers in my hand—hoping against hope that someone would actually buy one. Or maybe I was hoping nobody would, just so I could say—see, I was right, this is a dumb way to try to make a living. I think I sold six papers that first day, and went home with my cheek muscles aching from trying to put on a smile I didn't really feel inside.

A few weeks after that, as I had just started getting into the swing of greeting people, making eye contact and feeling a little more positive about what the other vendors and I were doing out there, I started making a few bucks, not a lot, but enough to keep me interested in going back day after day—I was becoming a veteran. So I thought, I found myself starting to care—at least a little—about the people I was selling the paper to, and it was starting to mean something when I asked somebody how their day was going. It was starting to pay off, at least in terms of personal satisfaction for doing something for a change instead of

just sitting home doing nothing.

Then I got ripped off. Oh, was I mad. Here I was, trying to pull myself out of the situation I was in, trying to do a little something for me, and some jerk had to help himself to my pack while my back was turned for a moment. I wrote about it—about the outrage, the sense of violation, the sense of loss, the repercussions on the home front that stemmed from my refusal to admit that maybe I had it coming, as a pay-off for being just a little more than somewhat stupid. Our Voice printed it and for the first time in my life, or at least in thirty-some years, I saw my stuff in print. It felt pretty good. I had some reader response to that first article, and it encouraged me to continue writing—looking always for the upside to the downside, and the column "The Street Goods" came to be.

The Street Goods is sometimes fun, sometimes torture—most times something inbetween, but it's almost always from the heart, because for me, that's the only place from which to write. That's where my friend Len writes from and I've learned a lot from reading his stuff—the honest thoughts of

an honest guy who takes the trouble to try and figure out what really goes on out here on the street corners. I feel really proud to be able to call him my friend because he's real when he's out there, and he gets really choked with me when I try to get away with anything less than real myself. Len says that when you're out on the corner with the paper, there's no place to hide, and he's right. I thank him for teaching me that. The reality is no matter where you go, or what you do—if you are going to be honest with yourself and the people in your life—if you're going to accept your accountability—there is no place to hide—in any area of your life.

That's one thing I really admire about the "Our Voice"—that we hold ourselves accountable to one thing and one thing only—to tell the truth, and in my opinion, we're the closest thing Alberta has to a free press. We aren't accountable to some faceless corporate giant or political machine. We can take the stories of people who would otherwise be faceless statistics and tell about their realities from where they really happen because we're real people just telling about what happened to someone we know. If that leaves the politicians, bureaucrats and statisticians with no place to hide—so much the better. If we can keep on putting out this paper, now up to 6500 copies a month after eight years of publication, it's gotta make some kind of difference.

There's a lot of people—vendors and customers—who really feel the impact of the paper in their daily lives, for a lot of different reasons, but the bottom line—I think—is that the paper gives back what you put into it. It's not just the money that I make, but the people that they really like it that I'm always there with a smile at the start of their day, and that it gives them something to go on. I don't mind at all saying that those same people are doing the same thing for me.

Being part of the "Our Voice" community has given me a voice—an opportunity to be heard, and I have to thank Ron, Natasha and Pieter for their support and encouragement over the past year. I also have to thank my fellow vendors for encouraging me to keep writing and selling. I also want to thank all the customers who keep buying the paper, because without them it wouldn't be "Our Voice".

JAKE FREEMAN

Cowboyjakeca@yahoo.com

*Jake was born in small town Saskatchewan, just a few miles north of Saskatoon and moved to Alberta at the age of one and a half, accompanied by his parents, who felt he had given them little choice in the matter. He grew up (allegedly) in Wainwright and Lloydminster, arriving in Edmonton in the early Seventies to attend the University of Alberta, where he studied for a Teaching Certificate, majoring in Billiards and minoring in Stud Poker, with a philosophy course or two on the side as well as studies in Canadian and American Literature. He began vending the Our Voice in March of 2001, began writing for the paper in July, sharing his news and views in a column called "The Street Goods". Recently, he began duties as outside distributor for the paper and can currently be found on various corners on Whyte Ave, dispensing smiles, lucky pennies, and homespun humor now that he's discovered his face won't break if he smiles.*





## Homeless Family

**A** mother and four children were forced into homelessness when the Health Board condemned their rental residence in the inner city. Diane Moody was served with papers by Glenn Jenkins, Inspector for Capital Health, which gave her until the end of March to move out of the run-down house located at 9527 - 106A Avenue.

Moody fought back tears as she spoke to the press March 8 about her situation, while three of her five children playfully popped in and out and a cat dozed lazily. Another of her children was in school, and a fifth child does not live with Moody. "The landlord refuses to fix things. When the kids have a bath, there is water running down to the living room below. I confronted the landlord numerous times, but nothing happened. He just said 'If they condemn it, they condemn it,'" said Moody.

She rented the house last September because, at \$550 a month plus utilities, it

was cheap. As a single parent with four children she receives a monthly Supports for Independence (welfare) cheque for \$994 plus her family allowance cheques. Because the landlord, Sanjeev N. Singh, refused to fix anything, she refused to pay her rent, and was served with Notice to appear in Court March 15, 2002 so he could have her evicted. Moody is angry about the eviction. She said Singh has no trouble taking money, but he refuses to put any back into the house.

"I don't know what I'll do. The landlord is forcing me out. I've been looking, but it's hard. I have to find someplace to go where they will take four kids," Moody said. "It's very stressful. I just got my kids stable, and now I have to move. It's hard for the kids - they've

gotten used to their school and now they have to move. It's at a point where I just want to give up and say to the welfare - here, take my kids."

Jenkins said the bare minimum health standards have not been met so he had no option but to condemn the house. Out of consideration for Moody's predicament, he gave her extra time till the end of the month instead of a 48-hour notice. He said, "It is hard for a family of that size to relocate."

The house has no smoke alarms, leaking ceilings, a bad foundation with cracks, pigeons living in the attic that could spread disease, stairs that have a tripping hazard, a broken oven door that is tied shut, and plumbing leaks, as well as other problems. The landlord has not complied with orders to renovate the house.

Elvin Toy, Downtown Warrant Officer and Derelict Housing Coordinator for the Edmonton City Police, brought in Capital Health after he saw the interior of the house. "I received a complaint from neighbours of a lot of kids unsupervised outside. As a courtesy, I came to ask personally

**"I don't know what I'll do. The landlord is forcing me out. I've been looking, but it's hard. I have to find someplace to go where they will take four kids**

about them. I spoke with a babysitter. While there, I noticed obvious deficiencies with the place," he said. "If children aren't given an adequate place to live, they can't concentrate. They need their basic needs met."

Mary Sullivan from the Boyle Street Co-op is working with the family to assist them in finding housing. She helped Moody put in an application with Capital Region Housing for subsidized housing.

"Our attempt is to get housing so the family can stay together," she said. "They

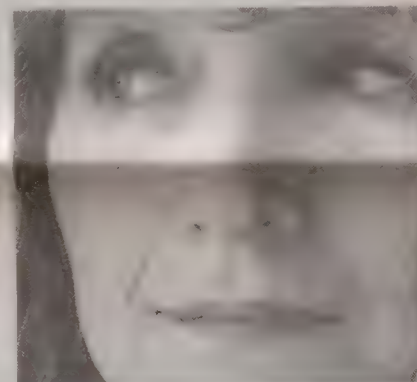
need safe, affordable housing." But she is not optimistic because of the low-vacancy rates and lack of low-cost housing available. The size of the family and the necessity to pay a damage deposit compound the problem, and it is unlikely that Singh will return Moody's \$550 damage deposit.

In court, the judge ruled that Moody could stay in the house until the end of March and that she does not have to pay the two months' back rent owing because the house was unfit for human habitation and had been unfit when she moved in.

LINDA DUMONT

I've been writing for Our Voice since 1994 when it was still called *Spare Change*. I also write for other publications and edit the Boyle McCauley News, the local community newspaper. As vendor number 35, I sold thousands of copies of Our Voice over an eight-year period, and I still sell when necessary. Since 1993, I have managed to get a diploma in journalism, and to kick the welfare habit to become a homeowner through the Central Edmonton Community Land Trust. They renovate derelict houses to sell to low income people on a rent-to-own basis.

Other interests include poetry, drawing and painting. Through Our Voice, I have been published in the four volumes of *Songs of the Street*, and self-published two volumes of my poetry. In 1990, I started a street ministry, Christ Love Ministry, composed entirely of volunteers. Since then I've made hundreds of pots of soup and thousands of sandwiches, and put on annual dinners where we served 500 or more people.



## Write about everything

**T**o write and vend the paper for the last year has been an experience that has brought me more respect for others. I don't have any formal writing experience never had anything published in a paper. This little paper has changed people's lives and given a voice to the many people who live in my area of town. There have been times in my days of new living that certain people entered my life and they become part of it to teach me about new ways to cope.

I have witnessed people change their lives and begin to write about their experiences. There is a certain friend, who I will call Jake, the cowboy poet, and he is one of those people who enter your life to just be your friend. I first met Jake at the office. I had to take his picture for the new tag he wanted. The first thought that went through my mind was - "Look at this guy - he really needs help from whatever drugs he's on."

Little did I know he would change my life and my way of looking at life. They say don't judge a book by its cover and Jake was one of those books. When I turned the pages of his life I found out that he was just

the same as me in many ways. I learned friendship is one thing to hold on to because the other person might need you sometime. Sometimes in my darkest days I would call up Jake and he would be excited to hear from me. I look forward to seeing him and his family when he invites me into his home. I have never had a friend who would teach me about a magical penny that would appear before my eyes and get people reactions to finding a little of luck to start off their day. I have learned to respect my friend no matter who he is and where he came from. It's the wild hair and that ever present smile that drew me to him. He is just one of the people that entered my life and gave me hope to go on with my everyday life.

When I became a vendor I was still drinking and I never knew that this little paper would save me from certain death. I got addicted to writing when I saw my own articles and since then this paper has become part of me. My year has had its days where I just didn't want to stay sober but then some strange thing would happen when I was close to total despair. My writing teaches me to look at things differently and ask questions about certain topics. I have seen many things that still have me shaking my head and met some interesting people as well. I got into writing while in a treatment center and it has been the best

thing I did. My writing style comes from the inside of me and it's good to look back on the year that just passed.

The work of the paper hasn't lost its focus to fight poverty and topics that are important to the inner-city residents. This paper has a unique way of reporting the news and the insight is from people who have been there. I have changed as a person and worked a lot on my own ways of writing. My year has been filled with uncertainty and there have been times where the whole world stopped in its tracks. When those planes hit those tall buildings the true heroes came in all sorts. We lost many who will be remembered for their giving up their lives for others.

Not everyone knows what I am all about and I express through my words of writing. I had an incident where one day I was waiting in line at this certain restaurant. There were a lot of people waiting and I was the last person in line. When I finally reached the front, the restaurant manager said to me "We don't serve your kind in here. You have to go". I still don't get what the hell is my kind. I guess this shows how stupid people really are when they are trying to impress the people around them.

The one thing about racism is that it comes in all sorts of ways and I found out that it has a lot to do with fear. My hope is that if I could make a difference in one per-

son's life then my job as a writer has just begun. The paper has helped me set goals for the future. I am still selling and talking to whoever finds the time. My year has just begun and the red road has many rocky days ahead. It's up to me what I want to do with my days and try to make people think of certain topics. I give hope to those who are still struggling to make it through the day. I also give hope to my brothers that they see that life isn't so bad when you're walking with the creator. I give hope to me to live each day as the creator has set out and taking it one day at a time.

LEN BLACKFOX MARTIAL





# JUSTICEFORALL

## J JUSTICE

You salivate on signal;  
they want a Pavlovian  
justice.

ROSE ELIZABETH BIRD



**L**ow-income Edmontonians facing legal issues have a new ally. The Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice (ECEJ), a project of the Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC), will be officially launched on April 18th, 2002.

ECEJ provides free legal advice, representation, referral and legal education to those who cannot afford it. According to ESPC Executive Director Arlene Chapman, the need for this service is long overdue. "Over the last few years, the ESPC has worked closely with a number of community members and groups in researching and developing this project. All involved with making the Centre a reality agree that low-income Edmontonians will greatly benefit from ECEJ's services."

ECEJ's legal services are provided during evening clinics. Local lawyers volunteer their time to provide pro bono legal advice to clients. The clinic has been in operation on Tuesday evenings since January 8th, 2002, and the goal is to provide service four evenings per week by the start of 2003. "Finding a full contingent of volunteer lawyers for the Centre is the biggest barrier we face in providing service four evenings per week," said Program Manager Blaire Coulter.

There are presently 27 lawyers from the Edmonton area who volunteer for the project. To provide services four evenings per week, over 120 lawyers will be required. While difficult to attain, ECEJ received a major boost recently when the Honourable Allan H. Wachowich, Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, became the project's Honorary Chair.

ECEJ will help individuals with legal issues such as landlord/tenant, human rights, debtor/creditor, immigration law and income security advocacy. (Income security includes: WCB, EI, CPP, SFI and AISH). Individuals with criminal and fami-

ly law matters can also receive legal advice, but in most cases, they will be referred to Legal Aid and Student Legal Services. "We want to work in partnership with other services, to avoid duplication," said Chapman.

There has been tremendous support from the community for ECEJ. Financial support has come from: the Alberta Law Foundation, the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Edmonton Community Lottery Board, and The Muttart Foundation. Non-financial partnerships are also under development with a host of Edmonton-area non-profit agencies.

The official project launch will be held at the Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice offices on Thursday, April 18th, 2002 at 4pm. ECEJ is located at Suite 52, 9912 - 106 Street. For more information on ECEJ or the project launch, please contact Blaire Coulter, ECEJ Program Manager at 702-1725 or by email at [bcoulter@ecej.ca](mailto:bcoulter@ecej.ca).

Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice  
Project Launch



## Landing Eagle

**T**he first Aboriginal publication to include all Aboriginal peoples, Metis, First Nations and Inuit, will be available this month.

"I want to cover all three groups in one paper - that's why it is a unique and original publication. The focus is on drawing out the wants and interests from the rest of the world by sharing and promoting Aboriginal culture, and bringing both groups of people to come to respect the differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peo-

ples," said Willie Klyne, Editor of Landing Eagle. "It's up to individuals like myself to realize we all have to help one another."

The first 28-page issue will be available through bands, First Nations Organizations, Metis Settlements and any other organizations and associations interested in taking out subscriptions. Individuals can take out a one-year subscription for \$36 or a two-year subscription for \$70. With the first issue not yet launched, Klyne already has subscriptions from as far away as Nova Scotia.

Each issue will focus on news related to aboriginal peoples in addition to having eight sections: adult, elders, youth, children, social health, sports and entertainment, business development and classifieds, with in-depth coverage on

**The first Aboriginal publication to include all Aboriginal peoples, Metis, First Nations and Inuit, will be available this month.**

treaties, national news, and local news such as the Epcor site where an old cemetery was discovered.

"I found out three members of my family were found at Epcor," Klyne said. He is pleased with Epcor's plans to close the road and erect a cairn at the site.

Klyne was born in Winnipeg and moved to Fort Qu'Appelle when he was a young child. Although he lived in town, he spent weekends at the Sioux Reserve west of the fort. He left school in Grade 8, then joined the army for three years when he was 17 with a special letter of permission from his mother.

"I was fortunate enough to go to Germany. It taught me a lot of respect and discipline," Klyne said.

Klyne comes from a large family, with eight brothers and one sister. When he returned to Canada, he got together

with members of his family who were drinking, and became involved in the drinking scene.

"I was an alcoholic until 16 years ago when I said "enough" and just quit. I never went to AA or anything - just one day that was it," he said.

Klyne is married with three children. He worked in construction until the kids grew up, then took Native Communications at Grant MacEwan College. The course, which has since been discontinued, taught a variety of media-related skills including journalism, photography, design and layout, radio and television.

Writing has been a lifelong interest for Klyne. He began writing poetry as soon as he learned to write when he was six-years-old, and even when working in other fields, he kept on writing.

An entrepreneur course through the Metis Business Corporation gave Klyne the skills he needed to get the newspaper started. He learned how to set up a small business, finances and balance sheets.

Landing Eagle is now a monthly publication, but Klyne plans to expand to bi-monthly publication in the future. To cover news and issues from different Aboriginal groups across Canada, he employs three writers, one from the north and one from out east as well as a local writer and he also accepts freelance submissions.

LINDA DUMONT



# CASTROSPEAKS

## Speech by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz President Of The Republic Of Cuba at the International Conference on Financing for Development Monterrey, Mexico 18th-22nd March 2002

NOT EVERYONE HERE WILL SHARE MY THOUGHTS. Still, I will respectfully say what I think.

The existing world economic order constitutes a system of plundering and exploitation like no other in history. Thus, the peoples believe less and less in statements and promises.

The prestige of the international financial institutions rates less than zero.

The world economy is today a huge casino. Recent analyses indicate that for every dollar that goes into trade, over one hundred end up in speculative operations completely disconnected from the real economy.

As a result of this economic order, over 75 percent of the world population lives in underdevelopment, and extreme poverty has already reached 1.2 billion people in the Third World. So, far from narrowing the gap is widening.

The revenue of the richest nations that in 1960 was 37 times larger than that of the poorest is now 74 times larger. The situation has reached such extremes that the assets of the three wealthiest persons in the world amount to the GDP of the 48 poorest countries combined.

The number of people actually starving was 826 million in the year 2001. There are at the moment 854 million illiterate adults while 325 million children do not attend school. There are 2 billion people who have no access to low cost medications and 2.4 billion lack the basic sanitation conditions. No less than 11 million children under the age of 5 perish every year from preventable causes while half a million go blind for lack of vitamin A.

The life span of the population in the developed world is 30 years higher than that of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa. A true genocide!

The poor countries should not be blamed for this tragedy. They neither conquered nor plundered entire continents for centuries;



they did not establish colonialism, or re-established slavery, and, modern imperialism is not of their making. Actually, they have been its victims. Therefore, the main responsibility for financing their development lies with those states that, for obvious historical reasons, enjoy today the benefits of those atrocities.

The rich world should condone their foreign debt and grant them fresh soft credits to finance their development. The traditional offers of assistance, always scant and often ridiculous, are either inadequate or unfulfilled.

For a true and sustainable economic and social development to take place much more is required than is usually admitted. Measures as those suggested by the late James Tobin to curtail the irrepressible flow of currency speculation—albeit it was not his idea to foster development—would perhaps be the only ones capable of generating enough funds, which in the hands of the UN agencies and not of awful institutions like the IMF, could supply direct development assistance with a democratic participation of all countries and without the need to sacrifice the independence and sovereignty of the peoples.

The Consensus draft, which the masters of the world are imposing on this confer-

ence, intends that we accept humiliating, conditioned and interfering alms.

Everything created since Bretton Woods until today should be reconsidered. A far-sighted vision was then missing, thus, the privileges and interests of the most powerful prevailed. In the face of the deep present crisis, a still worse future is offered where the economic, social and ecologic tragedy of an increasingly ungovernable world would never be resolved and where the number of the poor and the starving would grow higher, as if a large part of humanity were doomed.

It is high time for statesmen and politicians to calmly reflect on this. The belief that a social and economic order that has proven to be unsustainable can be forcibly imposed is really senseless.

As I have said before, the ever more sophisticated weapons piling up in the arsenals of the wealthiest and the mightiest can kill the illiterate, the ill, the poor and the hungry but they cannot kill ignorance, illnesses, poverty or hunger.

It should definitely be said: "Farewell to arms." Something must be done to save Humanity! A better world is possible!

FIDEL CASTRO

SPEECH S

Commencement oratory ... must eschew anything that smacks of partisan politics, political preference, sex, religion or unduly firm opinion. Nonetheless, there must be a **speech: Speeches** in our culture are the vacuum that fills a vacuum.

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

## Fanny Flirt and The One Percent Solution

One day I was talking with a lady who was walking her dog named Fanny Flirt...The way I got talking with her was—I saw her pick up a penny from the sidewalk. When I heard her cry of delight "Oh, a lucky penny," I called out after her—I hope it brings you lots of luck—and all of it good."

She replied "It's put a smile on my face—at that point, I think it's already done its job."

She continued on her way and I continued vending, greeting people with a smile, opening the door for them, enjoying the day and the lift our brief conversation had given me. After a while, she passed by in the other direction and she asked me what I was doing.

I said, "I'm selling the 'Our Voice', perhaps your familiar with it"

She said "I don't buy much extra of anything these days, being on a fixed income" Then she added, "with three rent increases in the past year, if it goes up anymore, I could be homeless myself."

"What's your paper all about?"

Now, I often have trouble giving a quick answer to that question, and just as often I fumble it, so I don't really remember what I said—but I added, there's a couple of things in here that I wrote—I'm hoping you'd like to read them.

-How much is it?

-Well, we sell by donation—I'm having a good day, so this one's already paid for—so it's your complimentary copy.

-And you're a writer?

-Well, I'm trying to be—right now, I'm collecting stories from people who take the time to talk to me.

She looked at the header and read 'The Spare Change Magazine'

-Would you like a story about change?

-Sure.

And she began to relate a favorite memory.

-It was in Montreal, the year was 1970, and I had just graduated from Carlton University. I was walking home one day, uncertain about my future, wondering how I was going to pay my rent and my debts, when I looked up and saw a piece of paper blown up against a fence. I walked over for a closer look, and there, underneath the paper was a pile of change and some bills. I don't remember the amount now, but I have it in my diary, and I could look it up. My first thought, my first reaction was to look up and I suddenly realized that my father was praying for me—and that everything would be O.K. He's a clergyman, and I've always had great faith in his prayers.

Her eyes seemed to mist just slightly and she continued:

-To this day, ever since that incident over thirty years ago, whenever I pick up a penny, I remember that time, and I just

don't worry anymore. Somehow it strengthens my faith that Someone is looking out for me.

There was that look that passed between us at that point—the one that passes between strangers that have shared a little more than they expected to. I could feel the lump in my throat. She looked down at her neatly groomed standard poodle, and gave her a loving pat on the head.

-You can share my story with your readers, if you mention her name. It's Fanny Flirt.

Maybe you could start out with -One day I was talking with a lady who was walking her dog named Fanny Flirt.

Somewhat, we got talking about the need for affordable housing—maybe because we both know how hard it is to find a reasonably priced rental where you are allowed to have pets. Maybe because it has become a pet topic of mine these days, and I said

-some of us are leaning on the Government to do something about it.

-This government...I don't know

As she and Fanny Flirt walked away, she called back

-Keep leaning on them!

The irony of all this is that the Federal Government has told us matching grants are available to any Province that will sign an agreement to build affordable housing. The feds will match any money the provinces put up—dollar for dollar—penny

for penny—so to speak. So far, Alberta has yet to sign that agreement—and I'm wondering why. Are we so "Pound wise and Penny foolish" that we can chase free money away? Or have I missed something?

It seems to me that if we have university graduates living in quiet residential districts worried about homelessness for themselves—the problem isn't restricted to the inner city, and it may be more far reaching than it first appears.

If the Alberta Government were to kick in the 1% of the budget toward housing costs—we could be seeing a considerable impact on the vacancy rate. People on fixed incomes might have a better chance of maintaining a lifestyle that sustains some hope for the future.

I don't think one lucky penny from each tax dollar is too much to ask...How about it folks?

We've been told it's in the works...is it going to be soon enough for Fanny Flirt and her best friend?

JAKE FREEMAN

If you know something I don't feel free to - email it to [cowboyjakeca@yahoo.com](mailto:cowboyjakeca@yahoo.com) and we'll try to make "cents" of it.





**P**roviding poor men and women with a chance to take control of their lives is the purpose of Our Voice. For seven years now we have given opportunities to more than 2000 people in Edmonton who have found themselves living in poverty.

Our Voice is a project of Bissell Centre and was founded in 1994 to empower people who were homeless or at risk of becoming so, as they work toward gainful employment and self-sufficiency. With more than a seven-year history, the Our Voice organization has gained notoriety for honest news reporting and our unique approach to addressing poverty.

**Yes**, I would like to  
contribute to Our Voice!

Our Voice has come a long way but needs more to be done and we cannot do it without you. Your tax-deductible financial contribution will allow us to continue our commitment of helping the homeless and the unemployed transition into gainful employment.

Won't you please take a minute and send in your contribution today? Your giving and supportive spirit will not go unrecognized.

**Please send a cheque to:**

Our Voice 10527-96 Street  
Edmonton AB. T5H 2H6

Your money will go toward:

- Helping with the printing costs of Our Voice.
- Computer and writing training for our vendors.
- Continued support and empowerment services for vendors.

Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation for  
\$100.00 \_\_\_ \$75.00 \_\_\_ \$50.0 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# POETRY:

## Poppie Block

Why Do Poppies Poison Us  
And Take Away Our Youth  
Judgement Day Is Coming,  
We Know This Is The Truth

Flanders Fields need more water  
To nurture help and grow  
Can we do this all together  
It's time to end this show

But yes it's to be continued  
Although it seems the end is near  
We have two paths to choose from  
It's time to show no fear

These fallen soldiers of times of gloom  
Bought our freedom with their souls  
It's time to remember, love, have faith  
Their sacrifice gave us goals

In Flanders Fields where the poppies grow  
The weeds are low and sparse  
The gardeners are a plenty,  
These paths are not a farce

Not all poppies poison us,  
If they reach full bloom  
Just remember them in November,  
And the peace that fills this room !!

GHOSTWRITER

## Divided We Stand

Some Children Are Hooked  
On Drugs, That Will Kill  
If We Don't Get Them Off  
Their Futures Stand Still

These Children Are Selling  
Their Bodies For Drugs  
They Now Forgot Their Families,  
And Replaced Them With Thugs

Kids Dealing Drugs  
Is A Hard Pill To Swallow  
But If We Lead By Example  
The Good Ones Will Follow

A Youthful Mind Is A  
Bad Thing To Waste  
Especially When Drugs  
Is The First Thing They Taste

Divided We Stand  
Till We Unite In A Cause  
To Save Most Our Children  
Take Their Lives Off Of Pause!

GHOSTWRITER

## King Heroin

The death drug  
I warn you

Don't come my way  
or with your soul  
you shall pay

Taking you away  
you grimace & sweat  
"Where have you been  
all my life?" you may ask.

Waiting patiently  
for your demise

Don't call me Satan  
your life is your own

You play your way  
into my chamber  
you come to worship  
at my throne

Don't think that  
the fetal position  
is a comfortable one  
of days long ago.

This is your death

A wasted life spent  
in idle pleasure

My gain  
Your weeping  
Full of Holes  
I leave you to your defeat  
Alone. Alone. Alone.

CASEY HUNT

## The White Indian

Gray Owl Had It Right  
His Tribe Strong And Brave  
Born To Be Different.  
He Had A Culture To Save

God Blessed This White Man,  
To Break Through The Other Side ...  
He Has Blessed My Printing,  
Thank-You For The Ride

I Have Smudged With Sweetgrass,  
All My Relations To You  
I'm Still In The Circle  
Happy When I'm Blue

The Circles Never Ending  
Alpha And Omega In The Sky  
Keep Me On The Red Road  
I Still Want To Fly

Kevin Costner Danced With Wolves  
His Spirit Strong And Free  
God Blessed The White Indians  
Just Take A Look At Me

GHOSTWRITER

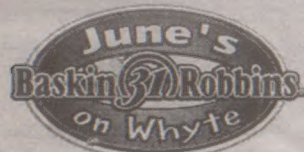


# Family shelter goes belly up



In spite of the obvious need for a family shelter for parents with children, the Aim Family Centre project was abandoned when their application for funding was turned down by the Edmonton Housing Trust Fund. The combined AIM and King's Community Society board has disbanded. Philia Family Group and Poverty in Action, who shared office space at the AIM building, have relocated their office to 10424 - Jasper Avenue.

LINDA DUMONT



June M. Kazeil

10650 Whyte Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T6E 2A7

Phone (780) 431-1778  
Office (780) 489-8105  
jmkazeil@hotmail.com

## EDMONTON

### Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board

Call 496-5959



Call if you are a landlord or a tenant that needs:

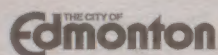
- Advice in residential tenancy matters
- Mediation in a residential tenancy dispute
- Education courses or workshops
- To purchase the Question & Answer Booklet or Forms
- Free Landlord and Tenant fact sheets

Some topics on the information line include:

- General Information
- Laws and Tips
- Security Deposits
- Starting a Tenancy
- Agreements
- Inspection Reports & Security Deposits
- Resolving Disputes
- Notices

Find information fast using  
The Landlord and Tenant Information  
Line 24 hours a day. Call 496-5959; press  
2, then press 1 and  
follow the instructions.

City of Edmonton, Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board  
Main Floor Chancery Hall  
#3 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
(Corner of 102A Avenue and 99 Street)  
Edmonton, AB T5J 2C3



## YARD WORK

### SPRING CLEANING

### ODD JOBS

Pay the worker,  
Not the broker



No placement, administration, or broker fees.  
Workers are available to work 24 hrs a day.  
7 days a week

(Appointments made within work hrs.)

AVERAGE HOURLY RATE - \$7.00

Bissell Centre's  
Casual Labour Office  
424-4385

Office Hours: Mon-Thur 7am-2pm

Frid 7am-noon

No fee job placement service

CALL 424-4385



Operated on a non-profit basis

## RBC Dominion Securities

#2300, 10155-102 St.  
Edmonton, AB  
T5J 2P4  
Ph. 944-8851

# SPARK

## PRINTWEAR

### 780 4889559

14410 - 118 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5L 2M7

info@sparkprintwear.com

The Official  
Our Voice  
Printers!



Call Spark  
for your  
t-shirts,  
graphics,  
hoodies,  
embroidery,  
hats, crests,  
sweat pants,  
banners,  
and more!



## Bee-ing a Friend to Bee

Friend (n): one who supports or favors someone's ideas on learning something new everytime her not-so-much-older friend comes to visit his little pal

Bee (n): a gathering of people for a specific purpose in teaching her not-so-much older friend.

The windows of the soul are always watching the goings on and there are many things to learn. The best way to learn is to experience and ask many questions. The worst thing a person can do is quit learning and observing how others handle everyday events. That brings a story of learning, growing-up and having respect for everything that creator has given me. This is one of the many ways I learned that life is a gift and what I do with it is my choice.

I have had many people touch my life and this little friend has played a part in teaching me to walk with my head held high. She taught me to be aware of the things that are bad for me and to never give up no matter how difficult it may be. I have watched her try to walk and she never gave

up until she accomplished the feat. The same way goes with life when the first steps are taken and falling down is just the learning part of it. To get back up and to keep trying is the fun part of it. There are times where things are rushed and a lot of important lessons are missed.

The everyday goings on have not bothered my pal and she has a way to deal with it. All she has to do is grow a little taller and learn to do things on her own. Like learn to tap with her fingers on the table and to watch real careful how a not-so-much-older friend does it. I hope she learns so her friend can learn something else new also. The secret to our friendship is that if she wants to approach my area it is up to her when and how much time she will take. The world is out there when it comes to my pal and the focus on who can stare down the other or act shy the longest. The approach of saying hi without words is important and paying attention to 'Scratch the cat' at the same time is fun also. The curious look is one way to see what happens before you say 'hi' and making sure to look in all directions of the room.

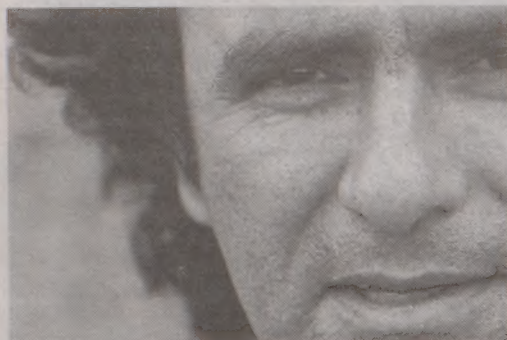
The first thing to do is pretend that the friend is not there, but maintaining eye contact is essential when you're acting shy. The other is the long look at your friend to see how the friend acts with Scratch. The thought of catnapping goes through her friend's mind and wishing that the cat might just magically appear under his jacket without his knowledge of how Scratch got there. Maybe it had to do with that magic penny thing that still appears before him from time to time. Those are mysteries that not-so-much-older friend must answer and be patient in learning like his little pal.

To check things out when you're little and experiencing different worlds is all part of learning through the windows of the soul. To observe is sometimes best way to learn about a person and always pretend to be shy around that not-so-much-older friend. The tapping of the fingers is coming along just great, its her not-so-much-older friend that is learning more from her then she knows. Having a little pal is the best way to forget the other world and focus on seeing a friend who is just curious about life as her pal. There's one more thing that her friend learned and that is take time to laugh - it is the music of the soul. Here's to all the little pals who are teaching older people like me to take it easy and let the creator do his job.

LEN BLACKFOX MARTIAL



# PEOPLES COLUMNIST



## One Year Anniversary

**T**his year, as of March 2002, I had the pleasure of celebrating my 1st year anniversary as The People's Columnist. The column was resurrected in March of 2001, though it was given to me in August of 1999.

It was then that the former Editor of Our Voice, Michael Walters, recognized my reporting abilities as a productive and informative asset to the paper.

So, since I was offering people a voice while reporting on their important issues, I decided the most appropriate name for an advocacy column would be The People's Columnist. Though the series only ran for three issues from August of 1999 to October of 1999, I differed with the former editor about how the column was being edited. My series was temporarily terminated for a 16-month period. I continued to write for the paper despite the series cancellation.

Then in the middle of January, 2001 a new Our Voice Editor, Natasha Laurence, was about to be appointed. She would soon replace the old - soon to be departing - Michael Walters.

One afternoon that same month (January 2001), a bright and outspoken lady, called me into her editorial office with an offer in mind. She was aware of my long and lengthy list of accomplishments with the paper and granted me my own column allowing me the option of naming it.

The column that was taken away from me by the old editor, was now being given back to me by the new, incoming editor. I obviously re-named my resurrected advocacy column, The People's Columnist, once again, since its return in March of 2001. I'm happy to say that the column has had a successful 14 issue run, up to the month of April so far. I've had the wonderful opportunity of covering some of the most interesting people in both the inner-city and around town.

In the Our Voice, March 2001, issue of the People's Columnist I interviewed Bill Belter, kicking off the debut of the new People's Columnist. Bill Belter at one time was a successful businessman and artist, operating an arts and crafts store called Mr. Bill's Arts and Crafts, located in the old Centennial Mall. The store unfortunately experienced a bankruptcy 6 years ago because of the relocation of two anchor stores, Safeway and Canadian Tire, that had operated in the same mall as Bill's business. The relocation of those two giant stores hurt the sales of neighboring retail shops in the mall.

Today, Bill continues to ply his trade in the unique art of painting wilderness scenes on circular saw blades. The circular saw blade art pieces straddle the wall of his inner-city apartment.

His tragic experience of losing a once-thriving

business doesn't stop him from selling the odd art piece in the privacy of his home. He now considers his old trade more of a hobby than a business. Bill is truly a moral example to both the art and business scene in Edmonton.

In the Our Voice June 2001 issue of The People's Columnist, I finally realized that not all TV reporters are clockwork, robotic news machines without emotions.

Shawna Randolph, CFRN television news anchorwoman, was chosen as an MS Media Spokesperson during the 11th Annual Super Cities Walk for Multiple Sclerosis, held on May 6th of 2001 at Rundle Park in Edmonton. I was at the annual fundraising walk and had the pleasure of interviewing Shawna. I realized why Shawna was chosen as a media spokesperson for the walk. Her husband suffers from the multi-degenerative disease. Shawna also helped me realize that the experience of having interviewed a television personality related to someone who suffers from MS is about being an individual as well.

Even if Shawna appears to be a robotic and consistent news anchor, she still has to juggle every day between being compassionate and caring to her disabled husband and dividing those feelings from returning to her clockwork duties as a news anchorwoman.

In the Our Voice September 2001 issue of The People's Columnist, I covered the story of Mike Smith. Mike is a Blackfoot-Cree Native, a former street-tough, from an abusive home. He ran away from home at age 13 and by age 19 found himself on the street dealing drugs and pulling armed robberies in Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland, and continually being sent to prison off and on for around a 20 year period.

One day Mike successfully drew the line by

abstaining from a life of crime in order to feed his drug and alcohol addiction. He checked into a detox, went to school and later landed a job as a Drop-in Support Worker, where's he's helped many troubled people.

In the Our Voice January 2002 issue of The People's Columnist I interviewed Ele Gibson, a family woman who once experienced a tragic divorce after helping her former husband get through school, only to be blessed later in life by successfully working as Manager of Resource Development at Bissell Centre. I admire Ele's hard determined work in raising money for charities and essential social programs offered to people at Bissell Centre.

Sorry to say, but there are just too many other people and stories to mention fully in this column. However, I would like to thank Michael Walters, who gave me my first crack at this column; my good friend, Managing Editor, Natasha Laurence, for showing me that if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Thanks for resurrecting the spirit that was once lost, "The People's Columnist"; Pieter DeVos Jr., for helping my column see the light in his sense of humour while doing the layout and design for my column; Distribution Manager, Ron MacLellan, for his added moral support in acting more like a proofreader than a Distribution Manager, while trouble-shooting as a proofreader for the occasional column.

Then, finally, a "Giant Thank You" to all the interesting people I had the wonderful experience of interviewing for my column, but could not find the room to mention them all, because without those interesting people out there, The People's Columnist could never live up to its name. Thanks to the "people!"

JOHN ZAPANTIS

## Performers Wanted!

### Family Entertainment Night (Coffee House)

**Open Stage! Live Music!  
Light Supper! Poetry Reading!**

**DOOR PRIZES!!**

**APRIL 16th, 2002**

**Supper 6 PM  
Music at 7 PM**

**Bissell Centre**

**10527 - 96 St.  
Contact: Earl @ 423-2285 ext. 144**

## YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE



### Dear Looking:

Look no further. Starting in Our Voice's anniversary issue there will be a new segment entitled "Your Guess is as Good as Mine." This will be an advice column written by yours truly, Your Guess. I'm looking forward to writing this column; however, I will need the help of you, the readers. If you want to send any questions, ideas or stories that you would like me to comment on, you have three ways of getting them to me. You can give them to Ron or Natasha of Our Voice, you can drop them off in the downstairs Casual Labour Office or you can E-Mail them to: [yourguess@hotmail.com](mailto:yourguess@hotmail.com).

Hope to hear from you all!

Your Guess

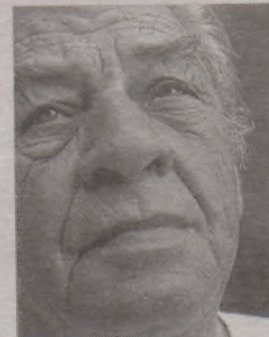
### Dear Your Guess:

I am a 25-year-old male who is in need of help. You see, I've been looking for an advice column to write to; however, I don't want to write into any of the big papers. Please, if you know of any advice columns that you could refer me to I would be most gracious.

Looking

### Reg Taylor

*advertising sales  
freelance writer  
Our Voice vendor*



#### Office Hours:

Tuesday to Friday  
8 AM to 1 PM

#101, 11816-82ST  
Edmonton, AB  
T5B 2Z3

Phone: (780) 471-6790

Our Voice Magazine / Bissell Centre / Native News





**Creating Solutions  
Relative to Prostitution  
Through Awareness,  
Community Initiatives,  
Education, Disbursing  
Funds, Advocacy**

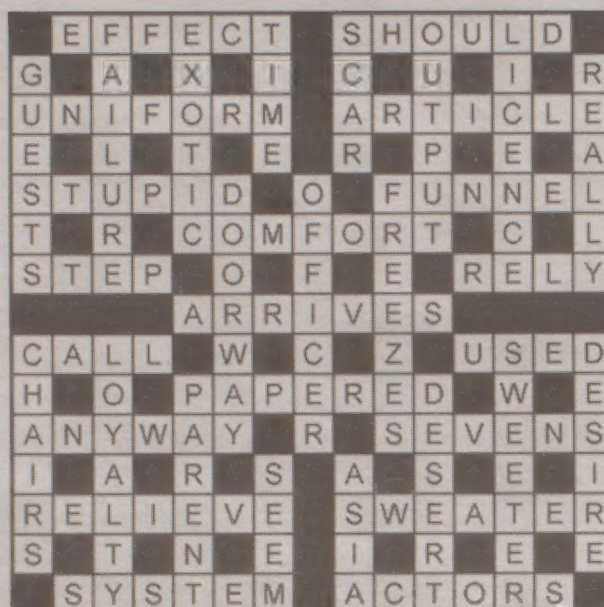
Street prostitution and its related activities harm children, adults, families, and communities.

The Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton is a collaboration of concerned individuals and groups working towards long-term solutions to street prostitution.

PAAFE works through community partnerships to reduce harm, create hope and affect positive social change:

- ▲ Prostitution Offender Program ("john school"),
- ▲ Grants to community agencies to support survivors and for counselling and bursaries,
- ▲ Awareness, Education, Community Initiatives

phone: (780) 471-6137  
fax: (780) 471-6237  
paafe@telusplanet.net



## Crossword Puzzle

**HITCH  
WAREHOUSE**

Bus: (403) 944-9299  
Fax: (403) 486-4690

John Reil

17220 - 107 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5S 1E5  
1-800-661-7557

## Immune System Breakthrough

Learn about Ai/E10, the ultimate nutrient. Documented and researched by one of the world's leading Viro-Immunologists:

Dr Jesse Stoff  
M.D., Naturopath & Homeopath

Clinically proven effective for:

Arthritis	Lupus
Colds & Flu	Hepatitis
Cancer	CMS
Asthma	Colitis
Crohn's	Candida
Psoriasis	Heart Disease
Allergies	HIV
Infections	Sinusitis
Fibromyalgia	Chronic Fatigue

For more information call:  
**Catherine or Revan**  
(780) 488-6250

Take care of your immune  
system & it will take care of you!

## VOM VENDOR OF THE MONTH

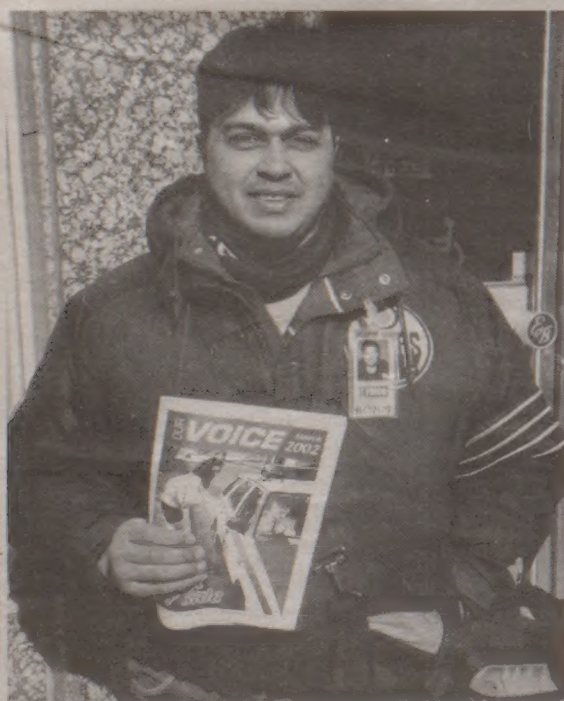


Photo: John Zapantis

"I like the job aspect of it all more than anything else, because I'm not begging for spare change anymore. I'm selling a magazine, which people can read."

## Keith M

You wouldn't know it, even though Our Voice veteran vendor Keith MacDonald is fluent speaking, intelligent, handsome and very popular with the women, he unfortunately suffers from schizophrenia.

Keith was born in San Fernando, Trinidad Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago are two islands incorporated as one country. Keith is the son of East Indian immigrant parents. He is the only son and the second oldest of four sisters. Our street smart vendor has a grade 12 matriculation.

When Keith was 19, he successfully landed a job working for Woolco department store. He was employed as a stock clerk for 6 months.

A better paying job came along as he later found employment as a swamper with a warehouse called NorthWell, but during his fifth year of employment, he started feeling the mental and emotional pressures of the job and home environment. The mental and emotional pressures caused him to suffer a nervous breakdown.

Keith was hospitalized for psychiatric evaluation. The evaluation confirmed that he was suffering from schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder characterized by loss of contact with reality. The symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, false beliefs, abnormal thinking and disrupted work and social function.

After spending over a year and a half in the psychiatric ward he was discharged.

He tried to secure employment, but each time he made an attempt to

maintain job stability things did not work out. He was either fired for showing up late or lacked the physical and emotional tolerance needed to hold down a job, feeling tired from being placed on medication.

From ages 29 to 36, Keith was continually dependant on the support of the welfare system. He had given up on employment because of his handicap. He became tired of the ratrace and failure to hold down a job, so he decided to live off of a girlfriend who panhandled on his behalf as a way of supplementing his odd craving for a bottle of Big Bear.

Then one day a few native passersby noticed Keith hidden around a street corner watching over his girlfriend from a distance, who had been panhandling on his behalf. They suggested he try selling a paper called Spare Change, now called Our Voice, The Spare Change Magazine instead of panhandling for spare change.

Keith took kindly to the advice and became a vendor in April of 1994, though the stint was very brief. He then once again made a comeback at Our Voice vending in June 2001.

He vends now to supplement his social assistance allowance and is very happy with his part-time job vending Our Voice. He says, "I like the job aspect of it all more than anything else, because I'm not begging for spare change anymore. I'm selling a magazine, which people can read. It's something that you can truly attest to that isn't panhandling. Myself, I just feel happy that I have a real part-time job."

JOHN ZAPANTIS



Bissell Centre's  
Thrift Shoppes

8818 118 Ave  
471-6644

9232 34 Ave  
440-1883

**New and  
Gently-Used  
Fashions  
plus.....**

- furniture • home goods
- jewellery • collectibles
- antiques

**the best quality  
lowest prices**

We are 100% non-profit  
and locally owned  
No GST over

BOTH STORES  
ARE OPEN SEVEN  
DAYS A WEEK

**ALL PROFITS SUPPORT THE PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES OF BISSELL CENTRE  
IN EDMONTON'S INNER CITY**

**ROBERT P. CHRISTENSEN PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION**

Barristers and Solicitors  
11450-124 Street  
Edmonton, AB.

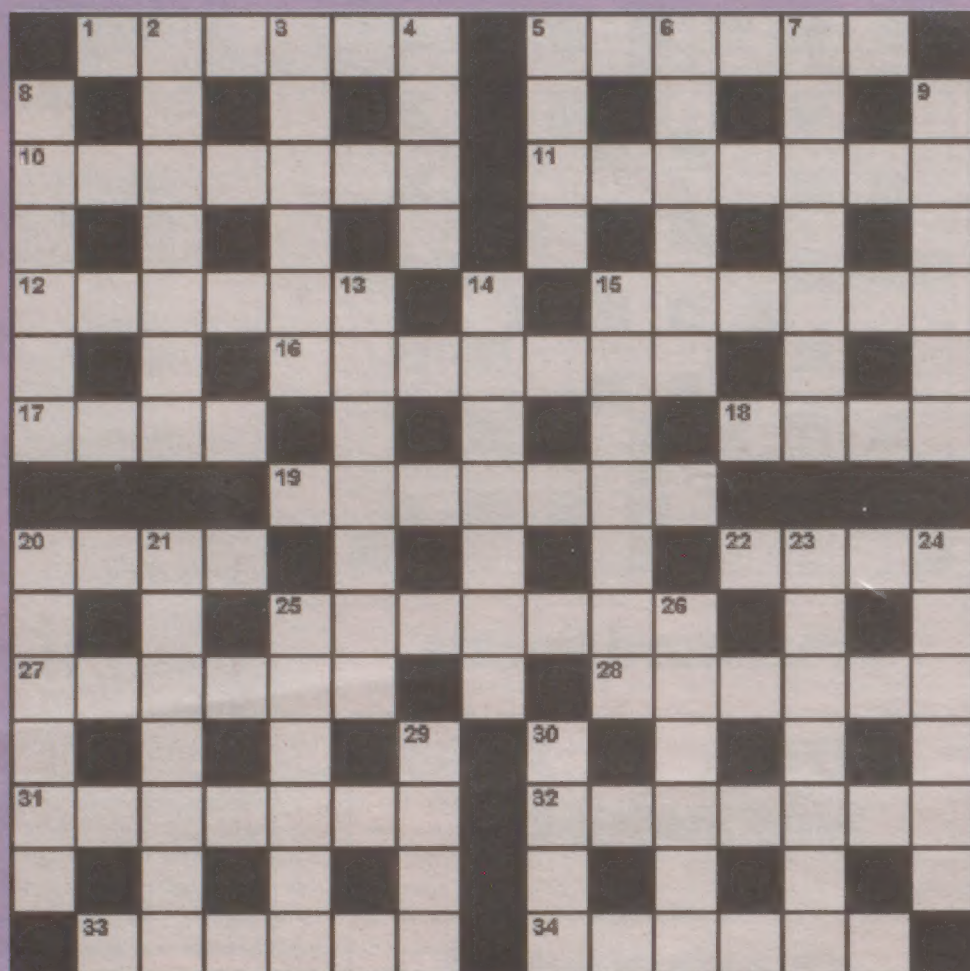
Robert P. Christensen  
Russell R. Wilkinson

Phone: 454-0387 Fax: 454-0389

General Practise of Law



# WORD UP



## QUOTABLEQUOTECHALLENGE

**M**uch of our world is structured around the simple values and beliefs contained within the familiar homilies and admonitions of social folklore. The impact of these often quoted quotes upon our interpretation of life's experiences is profound. Many of life's prejudices are developed from their stereotypic ideals - hence the ability to argue almost any famous quote with another equally famous quote that is an antithesis of itself. The real challenge here is to identify how this "hidden quote" may or may not have affected your life ... and to decide whether or not you want to accept it at face value.

Hidden within the following letters are words that combine to form one of these (in)famous quotes. The words may appear horizontally, vertically, diagonally or even in reverse. Some of the words you find may need to be used more than once to complete the quote ... and, just as in the real world, some words are there just to confuse things. Good luck!

D E I S C O D E  
E F N R E N I P  
E R U A E E N I  
N O P I R I D E  
Y O R I E R E D  
O F F E R N E W  
A D A Y I O D O  
T H E L P P A C

The 8 word hidden quote is: "\_\_\_\_\_"  
\_\_\_\_\_." (check next month's issue to see if you are correct)



Solutions: Page 19

- Down:**
- 1 Cause to happen or occur
  - 5 You must or had better
  - 10 Unvarying soldiers dress
  - 11 An item in the newspaper
  - 12 Clueless silly or idiotic
  - 15 Chimney on a ship
  - 16 Give solace or emotional strength to
  - 17 Pace or dance movement
  - 18 Count on
  - 19 Having got there
  - 20 Phone or bellow
  - 22 Secondhand
  - 25 Having decorated the walls
  - 27 In any event
  - 28 Septets
  - 31 Ease comfort or console
  - 32 Garment to make you hot
  - 33 Arrangement or a complex of methods
  - 34 Thespians or hams

- Across:**
- 2 Missfire or malfunction
  - 3 Strange and unusual
  - 4 Prison term
  - 5 Old wound
  - 6 End product or Yield
  - 7 Authorise officially
  - 8 Visitors to your home
  - 9 Genuinely and true
  - 13 Entranceway or Threshold
  - 14 Policeman or high ranking soldier
  - 15 Stops dead
  - 20 Presides over kitchen furniture
  - 21 Allegiance and devotion
  - 23 More angelic
  - 24 Want need or lust
  - 25 Foster or raise
  - 26 Abandon or geographic area
  - 29 Appear to exist
  - 30 Eastern continent

THE DEBUTS BY RAYMOND BIESINGER

